

THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION  
WITH  
BEFORE AND AFTER

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BY  
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EIGHTEENTH EDITION

*VOL. I.*

MANRESA PRESS, ROEHAMPTON, S.W.

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1922



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ALTHOUGH the whole of the First Edition of *The Matches* was disposed of in a very short time, yet, as had been anticipated, the cost of production exceeded by forty pounds the proceeds of the sale.

Some charitable friends kindly made good this deficit. The expense of printing this Second Edition will be somewhat reduced. But as efforts have been made to secure better paper and binding at a lower price, and as the number of the Plates is increased and an Index added, it is still doubtful whether the income will equal the outlay. It seems better, however, for the honour of our Lord and His Holy Mother, and for the good of souls, to secure a wider circulation by keeping the price as low as may be.

Some surprise has been expressed that more use has not been made in these volumes of the discoveries of Sir Charles Wilson, Sir Charles Warren, Captain Conder, and other distinguished Explorers.

One answer to this objection is found in an article published by Captain Conder in the *Scottish Review* for January of the present year. He there tells us that in that portion of Jerusalem with which these volumes are chiefly concerned, the ground is covered with houses; and that, consequently, the Explorers have not been able there to make any excavations. He adds that much further excavation will be necessary before it can be possible to induce all parties to accept the conjectures put forward by the Explorers with regard to the site of Calvary and the Sepulchre.

May we not then delay to adopt these novel theories till the Explorers have been able to make such excavations as shall justify their most revolutionary views?

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From Captain Conder's showing, the Explorers have made absolutely no excavations whatsoever in the quarter of the city where the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre now stands; and, consequently, have nothing to offer us but conjectures and theories utterly subversive of all the old Catholic traditions. Would it not then be, at present, quite premature to give up these Sacred Traditions, and take in exchange rash conjectures, which are not as yet in any way supported by what Captain Conder calls "the logic of the spade"?

Monuments unearthed by the spade are no doubt; witnesses whose testimony might upset many traditions till now accepted. And so long as the Explorers are content faithfully to record all that the pick-axe and the spade discover, they render excellent service. But if the Explorers begin to publish, confidently, theories and assumptions which run far ahead of their spades, they may easily be changed from most valuable friends into enemies peculiarly dangerous. For the authority which deservedly belongs to them as Explorers is extended by the unwary to theories exceedingly reckless.

I venture to use the word "reckless," because the Explorers, before they have been able to make any excavations whatever on the ground so hallowed in our eyes, call upon us to believe (1) that St. Helen and Constantine knew nothing about the true site of Calvary; (2) that the faithful ever since have been in gross error on this point; and (3) that the honour paid to the true Cross by Holy Church and to the sacred Nails is all based on imposture; since they never could have been found on this site.

Again, is it not quite premature and reckless, before the necessary excavations have been made, to publish maps in which Calvary is placed close to Gethsemani, on the eastern side of the city? These maps may not be published by the Explorers themselves, but they are

at least the work of disciples who wish to propagate their doctrine. Surely the publication of such maps does not fall short of rashness and recklessness. For even the English and American writers themselves, who are combined in the attack on the old Catholic tradition, are not at all agreed as to the site to be substituted. For while some of them, as has just been said, place it on Mount Moriah, near Gethsemani, not a few among them have been anxious to raise a subscription in order to secure a site to the north of the city, near the convent of the Dominican Fathers, and there to establish an Anglo-American Calvary.

Such an enterprise is perhaps less astounding if we look at the map of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and the adjacent grounds, prepared by the celebrated antiquarian Mr. Schick, at the command of the Sultan. From this map we see that while the Greeks, the Latins, the Copts, the Armenians, the Russians, and the Germans have all secured plots of ground, smaller or larger, round about the Sepulchre, the English and Americans are the only ones left out in the cold. What wonder, then, if they bestir themselves?

Captain Conder and others who incline to the northern site for Calvary, adduce in its favour arguments of this kind:

First, Captain Conder has there discovered a Jewish tomb which might very well, so he thinks, have been the Tomb of our Lord. Second, the lie of the ground would make it a likely place to be selected for the Crucifixion. Third, Captain Conder adds that he found a tradition existing among the Jews that this was of old the place of execution; and of this tradition he makes great capital.

It will be observed that none of these arguments are based on "the logic of the spade". They are not the outcome of excavations; they are sheer conjectures. Wherefore, why we should abandon the time-honoured

Christian tradition for this Jewish tradition, now for the first time brought to light, does not appear.

There is only one thing more to be added. It is this. While Sir Charles Wilson boldly asserts that no trace has ever been discovered near the Christian Calvary of the western city wall, which must have been there if this be the true site; and while Captain Conder tells us that the Explorers have never been able to make excavations in this quarter—which fact may well account for Sir Charles Wilson's mistaken notion—the well-known architect and antiquary, Mr. Schick, to whom the Explorers very much defer, and who is considered to know more about ancient Jerusalem than any living man, assures us *that* he has seen undoubted traces of the wall in question.

Mr. Schick has worked as an architect in Jerusalem for forty years; and before that period served under his father, who was also an architect in that city. In the course of his long career he has often made excavations on the ground which the Explorers have not been permitted to approach; and he assured the author of these volumes with his own lips—and he has made the same statement, illustrated with careful drawings, in his printed publications—that he was able to trace accurately the Fosse that ran along this portion of the city walls. He further adds that the reason why more remains of the foundations of the old wall are not extant is this, that the materials were used for the Great Basilica of Constantine and St. Helen. He states, moreover, that the foundations of an ancient gateway, probably the Judgment Gate, are to be seen on the ground purchased by the Russians, and now covered with houses.

All this being so, would it be prudent to alter this Second Edition in conformity with the views of our new masters?

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# THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION,

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## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY.

*Do this, our Blessed Lord said on the last night of His life on earth, Do this for a commemoration of Me* (St. Luke xxii.), that is, do this in remembrance of Me. His dying wish, then, is to be remembered by us. His parting request to us is, "Remember Me".

The Blessed Eucharist is instituted, and the Holy Mass established, to be the *sacrifice to the Lord by ordinance, continual and everlasting* (Ezech. xlv. 14), in order that we may remember our Blessed Lord and not forget Him.

*Forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee*, is a word addressed to us by the Holy Ghost (Ecclus. xxix. 19).

We are touched by the pathetic appeal of holy Joseph to his fellow-prisoner, the king's chief butler, now set free and about to leave the prison: *Only remember me, when it shall be well with thee, and do me this kindness: to put Pharaoh in mind to take me out of this prison: for I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here without any fault was cast into the dungeon* (Genesis xl.). Immeasurably more earnest and more moving is the appeal of our Blessed Lord to us from the tabernacle, *Remember Me, only remember Me*, for without any fault do I lie here forgotten in this prison. *Only remember Me when it shall be well with thee*. Yes, and also when things go ill with thee, *remember Me*. *Only remember Me*. This is the dying petition of Jesus, meek and humble of Heart. Does He ask too much of us? Is His request too large, too bold, too hard?

It is in His Sacred Passion that our Blessed Saviour specially desires to be remembered by us. It is as a memorial of His Death and Passion that the Blessed Eucharist is bequeathed to us. So was it revealed to St. Paul: *For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come* (1 Cor. xi.).

Why, then, is our Blessed Lord so desirous that we should remember Him in His Sacred Passion?

First for His own sake. A mother who loves cannot help wishing to live in the thoughts and in the heart of her child: and our Lord has many times impressed upon us that His Sacred Heart goes far beyond all the tenderness of mothers and fathers in the strength of His love for us. Thus when Sion said of old, *The Lord hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me*, His prompt and most earnest reply was: *Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands, thy walls are always before My eyes* (Isaiah xlix.). So, too, when urging us to confidence in prayer, He presents to us parental love as a picture; and as we gaze upon it He says, *Sussum corda*, bid your heart soar higher, far higher, to understand what My Heart feels; for from it descends *all paternity* (Ephes. iii.), and all motherly devotedness and self-sacrifice. *Which of you, He says to us, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?* (St. Luke xi.).

A legitimate, therefore, and authorised and safe way of arriving at some faint idea of the charity and love of our Lord's Sacred Heart, is to watch and note all the best and highest instances of strong and devoted love which we meet with in mothers and fathers and true friends here on earth, and when our hearts are consoled and cheered and brightened by meeting with such good things in this our prison, then to bid our souls rise upwards high and higher still, above the beauty of these created things, and hear the Holy Spirit whispering within us those words of Wisdom: *By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby*. If men

are delighted with their beauty, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first author of beauty made all those things (Wisdom xiii.). It is our Lord, our God, Who is Charity (1 St. John iv.), and the God of peace and love (2 Cor. xiii. 11), Who casts into the hearts of fathers and mothers and true friends some sparks of that fire which burns everlastingly in His own Heart, and which He so much desires to see enkindled in us (St. Luke xii. 49).

If, then, a good mother, a good father, a true friend, cannot help desiring to be remembered by those whom they love, we may believe most undoubtingly that the Heart of our Lord for His own sake, and because He loves us with an everlasting love, desires much to live in our thoughts and reign in our hearts, and to be set as a seal on our hearts, as a seal on our hands (Cant. viii.).

True love must always be so far selfish as to wish for its own sake to have a return of love. This is legitimate selfishness. *I am, I am He*, our Lord says, *that will blot out thy iniquities for My own sake* (Isaiah xliii.). For His own sake, because He is the fondest of Fathers and loves His children unspeakably, He forgives us; for *His own sake* He desires to be remembered by us.

St. Paul tells us that our Saviour *having joy set before Him endured the Cross* (Hebrews xii. 2). That is to say—so some commentators understand the words—the Angel who comforted Him during His Agony in the Garden set before His mind the joyful fruits that would be produced by His redemption. Now one surely of these consoling fruits was that men would remember Him.

As He was so soon to rise from the tomb, He did not in reality need the myrrh and aloes which they brought to embalm His Wounds, but He greatly needs and much desires, for *His own sake*, that every one of His Wounds be embalmed and kept fresh in our souls by devout and affectionate remembrance. *Only remember Me* when things go well with thee; and also when things go ill with thee, *remember Me*.

But, alas! it is with us as with the chief butler, who when things prospered with him forgot his interpreter who had given him so much comfort. For when things go well with us we too are apt to forget our Surety Who hath given His life for us. When we are prospering, we enjoy the good

things around us and forget the Giver, and Him also Who when all was lost bought back with His life-Blood the good things for us.

*A sinner attributeth to himself the goods of his surety; and he that is of an unthankful mind will leave him that delivered him* (Ecclus. xxix. 21).

We forget our Surety when things are going well with us, and, what is still more strange, we do not even remember Him when things go ill with us. Trouble ought by rights to draw us near to Christ Jesus. It certainly draws Him near to us, as He tells us in the goth Psalm, *I am with him in tribulation*. Since the Death of our Lord every Christian who suffers is like the good thief, sharing Calvary with Christ Jesus, and is by Him regarded with a special sympathy and fellow-feeling. But the father of lies, well knowing that the time of suffering is a time of special privilege, busily whispers into the ear of the sufferer that God is against him, and is chastising him with a heavy hand, rigorously and without pity. Whereas the truth all the while may be that the suffering sent is no chastisement at all, but a signal grace; and even if a chastisement, one inflicted not in anger but in mercy, and with much compassion: *For not from His heart hath He afflicted or cast off the sons of men* (Lament. iii.).

But there is, besides, another reason why our Saviour is very anxious that we should remember Him in His Passion and His Death, and that is *for our sakes*. For He well knows that while we are remembering Him, and thinking of Him, and looking on Him, grace, and holiness, and salvation come out from Him to us. Beneficent persons sometimes set up a fountain of pure and wholesome water in the centre of a village, that all the poor families may come to draw as often as they wish. Even so Christ crucified wishes to be set up in every Christian hamlet and every Christian home. *Behold God is my Saviour. I will deal confidently and will not fear. He is become my salvation. You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains* (Isaiah xii.).

After He had passed, as St. Luke writes, *the whole night in the prayer of God*, and on the following morning selected from among His disciples His twelve Apostles, He went down into the plain, and was surrounded by the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people from all

Judea and Jerusalem and the sea-coasts both of Tyre and Sidon; and all the multitude sought to touch Him, *for virtue went out from Him and healed all* (St. Luke vi.). We must take notice of the phrase, *Virtue went out from Him*. He used the same word Himself when the woman who had suffered so long from loss of blood came behind Him and touched Him, and was in an instant cured: *Who is it that touched Me? And all denying, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say, Who touched Me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me, for I know that virtue is gone out from Me* (St. Luke viii.).

*Virtue is gone out from Me*. It is by contagion that some diseases are spread; that is, the poison passes from the body of one contaminated into other bodies. Even so grace comes out from the Body and the Soul of our Blessed Lord into our hearts if we come near enough to Him.

St. John teaches us that in Heaven *we shall be like to Him because we shall see Him as He is* (1 St. John iii.). That is to say, as cold iron here on earth when brought near enough to fire becomes itself fire, so when all barriers are removed between our souls and our Lord, and we are brought near to Him, and, as it were, in contact with Him, we shall at once become bright with His light; burning with the fire that lives in His Heart; wise with His wisdom, and holy with His holiness.

This heavenly work we can begin here on earth. *If I shall touch only His garment* (St. Matt. ix.), the sick woman said, *I shall be healed*. We can no longer touch the hem of His garment, but that is not needed. If it were necessary, the privilege would not be denied us, for He is the same Jesus to us as to those who then were sick or sinful. To us as well as them He says: *Come to Me, all you who labour* (St. Matt. xi.).

But it is not with our hands that we are to touch His garments, nor with our eyes are we to look on His sacred face, but our souls are to draw very near to Him and to look at Him earnestly and perseveringly, and to listen most attentively to His words. And while we do this, virtue comes out from Him to us; and we are unconsciously drinking the waters from the fountains of our Saviour. All this was revealed under a figure in days long gone by, when the people of God murmured in the wilderness of

Edom. For the Lord sent among them *fiery serpents which bit them and killed many of them*. Upon this they came to Moses, and said: *We have sinned, pray that He may take away these serpents from us*. But when Moses prayed, the Lord said to him: *Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign, whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live* (Numbers xxi.). The fiery serpents, we notice, are not taken away; but whoever looks at the brazen serpent is healed; and this is a *sign*. But of what? Is not the serpent the emblem of Satan? If so, how can it be a saving sign? True, it is the emblem of Satan, because Satan is the sinner, the arch-sinner. But when Jesus Christ is crucified, the Lord has *laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (Isaiah liii.). He is the representative of the sinful family. To use St. Paul's language, He is for that day become sin, *Him that knew not sin*, Him His Father hath made become *sin for us* (2 Cor. v.). Therefore the brazen serpent was a type of Jesus crucified, and upon Him we are to look if we would be healed. Hence we read in the Book of Wisdom (xvi. 7), *He that turned to it (the brazen serpent) was not healed by that which he saw, but by Thee, the Saviour of all*.

We might shut ourselves up, as men addicted to philosophy have done, to study virtues, and vices, and try thus to find out a road to righteousness, and motives for conquering our passions; but seeing that it would not be good for a man thus to fight alone, *Come to Me*, our Lord says, *Come to Me*; look at the brazen serpent, look at your Saviour become for you a sinner and bearing all the penalties of sin on Calvary, and while you gaze on Him virtue will come out from Him and heal your wounds and substitute holiness for vice in a way that philosophers never even dreamed of.

For His own sake, then, and for ours also, the Heart of our Blessed Saviour says to us: *Remember Me; forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee*.

It was the fond boast, the dream, if I may so speak, of His Sacred Heart, that *if I be lifted up I shall draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.); and we remember also the prophecy and promise which long before He uttered by the mouth of Zacharias: *I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of prayer, and they shall look upon Me, Whom they have pierced*:

and they shall mourn for Him as one mourner for an only son, and they shall grieve over Him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born. In that day there shall be a great lamentation in Jerusalem;—and the land shall mourn: families and families apart.—In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: for the washing of the sinner.—And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will destroy the names of idols out of the earth, and they shall be remembered no more; and I will take away the false prophets, and the unclean spirit out of the earth (Zach. xii. & xiii.).

Mark well how many wonderful graces are to come in these days when we shall look on Him Whom we have pierced. What wonder that our Catholic forefathers never tired of multiplying images of Jesus crucified! They loved to find Christ on His Cross in the streets and in the squares, that the passers-by might pause a little while to think if there were sorrow like to His sorrow. Outside the city wall also, in country-places, they set up the holy rood on the hill-top that the weary traveller might find refreshment by looking on Christ crucified. On the sea-beaten rock too the crucifix stood, that the shipwrecked might turn their eyes to Jesus on Calvary. And by the graves of the dead the cross was erected, that bereaved mourners might find some rest for their breaking hearts by thinking on Christ Jesus and His forlorn Mother.

What wonder, on the other hand, that as long as Jesus was on earth Satan never ceased to urge upon his followers his blasphemous war-cry: *Cut Him off from the land of the living!* (Jerem. vi.). What wonder that now, as in all ages since the first Christian Pentecost, Lucifer's watch-word ever is: *Let His name be remembered no more!*

What should be our hearty counter-cry? *If I forget Thee, O Calvary, let my right hand be forgotten: let my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember Thee if I make not Calvary the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxxvi.).

It will help us much to remember our Lord and His Death, if we form the habit of dividing the day and the night into the *watches of the Passion*, each watch of three hours. This we can do with less effort of the mind than if we attempt to note the clock of the Passion hour by hour. The four watches of the night and the four watches of the day are easily remembered; and the Divine



providence that overruled Satan's plans and the plans of the Jewish Priests, and arranged that the Sacred Passion in every one of its incidents should conduce to the salvation and sanctity of men, decreed, among other details, that it should just fill up and consecrate all the watches of one night and all the watches of the following day.

During the first night-watch, from sunset till nine, our Blessed Saviour is in the Supper-room.

During the second watch, from nine to midnight, in the Garden.

During the third, from midnight to the cock-crow, in the house of Annas and the judgment-hall of Caiphas.

During the fourth watch, from the cock-crow till daybreak, in the hands of the servants.

After daybreak, during the first watch, from six till nine, the Council of the Sanhedrim meet, and after condemning Him lead Him to Pilate, to Herod, and back to the Pretorium, to be degraded below Barabbas.

During the second watch, from the third hour (that is, from nine o'clock) to mid-day, He is scourged, crowned, and presented to the people, condemned, and led to Calvary, and crucified.

From mid-day till the ninth hour, the third watch, He hangs on the Cross.

From the ninth hour to sundown they are burying His Sacred Body. And so all His work is completed.

Before He died, He said: *It is consummated*. All the work My Father gave Me to do is perfectly accomplished. Among the rest, this salutary work also is done—all the watches of the day and the night are now coloured by the holy light that comes from Calvary and Gethsemani.

We often see a large apartment filled with the beautiful and softened light that comes from the lamp with its coloured shade upon it. Even so from Calvary, under its veil of darkness, there is spread over the Christian world a mellow and softened and hallowed light; sad, if you will, and mournful, but so beautiful, so consoling, so full of loveliness and heavenly grace, that it has sufficed to draw away the hearts of men from all that this world can offer. Calvary is become the home of the Christian heart. Every night and every day, from sunset to sunrise, is for the faithful Christian become a Good Friday, hallowed by the night-watches and the day-watches of

our Saviour's Passion, and by the everlasting Sacrifice of the Altar, the *clean Oblation* offered from sunrise to sundown and from sunset till dawn, to show the *Death of the Lord*.

May we have the grace to adopt the resolution of the Spouse in the Canticles: *Till the day break, and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense* (Cant. iv. 6). That is to say, till my soul escape out of the shadows and darkness of this world, till the bright day of eternity dawn upon me, my resting-place, my shelter, the home of my heart, shall be on the mountain of myrrh, on the hill of frankincense; there to embalm with the myrrh of a devout remembrance the wounds of my Lord crucified, and there with the frankincense of prayer to look on Him Whom I have pierced.

## II.

### ST. IGNATIUS' METHOD OF CONTEMPLATING THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

When you, devout reader, and many other persons meet together in a lecture-hall, or at a concert, or for an evening entertainment, there are three things, among many others, which you often do.

I. First, *you watch with your eyes* some person who enters, or comes near you. You study his face, his dress, his gait, his manner; and, through his outward appearance, make guesses and conjectures as to his age, his position in life, his inward dispositions, his character, his mental qualities, or his present frame of mind; and after some time you come to some conclusion: "This man, I think, is amiable, or he is stern. He is mild, or he seems haughty and harsh."

If you know the person already, then your conclusions or judgments are merely about his present state of mind: "He seems to be in trouble to-day; or he is in a good humour; I think he must be unwell; or he seems in much better spirits than usual."

Or again, your thoughts may take a turn of this kind: "How pleasing it is to find a man of such high position so simply dressed; or one of such eminent abilities so

unpretending; or one whom I know to have such sorrows of his own so thoughtful of others."

So that sometimes you are engrossed with a study of the outer man; sometimes attending more to his inward qualities.

After this study of the person to whom your attention has been drawn, you then often *turn upon yourself, or reflect upon yourself*, and ask yourself some question of this kind: "What shall I do? Shall I make acquaintance with him, or not?" Or, if I know him already, "Shall I go to speak to him, or keep out of his way? There is something that I want to get from him; does this seem to be the right moment? Is he in a good humour?" and so on.

II. After a while this person whom you have been studying goes away out of your sight. Your occupation is gone. What, then, are you now doing? "Are you studying some one else with your eyes?" "No, I am not." "What, then, are you doing?" "*I am listening with my ears*. Two or three friends are around me, and *I am listening*, and I have just heard one say that there was a fire yesterday in the East End, in the very street where my uncle possesses many houses."

"Well, what then?" "Why, when you came up I was thinking about myself, that is, *turning upon myself*, or reflecting upon myself, and asking: What I ought to do? I am my uncle's only nephew, and a great favourite with him. This fire may concern me more than a little. I am thinking whether I ought to go down to the East End to see after things; to find out whether he has suffered, and whether I ought to wire to him, and the rest."

At another time when you are listening, what impresses you may be that the speaker is so high-minded; that his principles are so good, his advice so sound; or that he sees deeper into the subject than others do; or that he weighs his words carefully; and you afterwards find yourself considering what sort of things he praised and valued, and what were the things that he disliked and condemned.

Or, on the other hand, it may be that you perceive a tone of exaggeration, a spirit of harsh criticism, which scares you, or you hear some oracles uttered which you mistrust.

After listening in this way, *you turn on yourself* to see whether you shall avoid this speaker, or try to have him, as a friend.

III. Half an hour later, when this point has all been settled, some one comes and asks: "What are you doing now? Are you studying any particular person with your eyes, as you were an hour ago?" "No, I am not." "Are you listening to any news?" "No, there is no one speaking to me." "What, then, are you doing?" "I am looking at what is going on in that corner. There is movement there. There is a crowd gathering, and some disturbance there. I think I saw some one fall down; and I heard a cry, and I then saw some one run out of the room, holding a cloth which seemed to be stained with blood."

"Well, what then?" "Why, I was just thinking about myself (*turning back on myself*): considering what I ought to do. Can I be of any use? Shall I go and see whether they want some brandy, or some bandages? or whether a doctor should be sent for?"

Here, then, are three ways in which we occupy our minds on these occasions when we are in the presence of other persons.

1. *We look with our eyes and study some particular person, some one individual*, and after gazing and studying for a time, we turn back or reflect on ourselves, and think what we ought to do.

2. *We listen with our ears*; and if we hear something that strikes us, we *turn, or reflect, on ourselves*, and consider what we ought to do.

3. *With our eyes again*, we watch, not now *some one person* *quiescent*, but some movement, some action; as, for instance, one striking another, a policeman leading away a prisoner; or some one stealing from another; or some persons buying or selling; and thus after watching actions we *turn again or reflect on ourselves*, and think, "What shall I do?"

We may, doubtless, safely say that all persons are very frequently occupied in one or other of these three ways. No great ability is required for any of these exercises. The work of studying an individual with our eyes, and then making up our minds whether we shall go up to him or not, requires no special cleverness. We are all capable of this effort.

So, too, we have all ability enough to listen to what a neighbour says, and then reflect and consider, "What shall I do?"

Lastly, it is no less easy to watch some movement, some action, an assault, a theft, some bargaining, and then reflect as to what course we shall take.

Well, our Lord for our sakes chooses easy methods. He promised by Isaiah (c. xxxv.) that in His Church the path to truth should be so plain that a fool could find it. And in the cave at Manresa it was shown to St. Ignatius that the simple method here described is the best for contemplating the Life and Death of our Lord. It is supposed that our Blessed Lady was his teacher there, and made known to him that she herself while on earth followed this method of gaining more and more knowledge of her Son, and more and more sanctity for herself. She was nourishing her own holiness by studying carefully every Divine gift and grace poured out on His Sacred Humanity: *The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness* (Isaiah xl.).

She sometimes in silence *with her eyes* watched His features, His looks, His gestures, and through His eternal deportment tried to read the beauty and loveliness and holiness of His Soul within, and of His Divinity. Or again, she was contrasting the majesty of the hidden God with His outward littleness; His infinite wisdom with the fool's garment put upon Him by men; His boundless *charity and goodness* with the little love shown to Him. *Then she turned back, or reflected on herself*, and considered what she could imitate, how profoundly she ought to adore, how intensely she ought to love Him.

At other times, *she listened most attentively to His words*, and laid them up in her memory, and, as we read, compared word with word in her heart, and when she had industriously studied all their hidden sense and meaning and also noted well the tones of His voice, the earnestness, calmness, and gentleness with which He spoke, then she again turned or reflected on herself, and thought what fruit these Divine seeds ought to bring forth in her soul.

Lastly, with her eyes she watched *His movements, His actions*, how He walked, how He did His carpenter's work, how He ate His food; and, later on, how men struck Him and bound Him with cords, and crucified Him, and what was the action of His Sacred Heart towards them. After this, turning or reflecting on herself,

she considered what increase of sanctity and love she could gather from this spectacle.

This is the simple method of *contemplation*<sup>1</sup> which

St. Ignatius proposes to us.

But first he teaches us what to do by way of

#### PREPARATION FOR OUR CONTEMPLATION.

*Overnight.*—I. As a preparation for our next morning's contemplation he directs us to select overnight from the Gospel, or some suitable book, the scene that we wish to contemplate, fixing well in our minds that part of the Gospel narrative which seems to us to contain good food for our souls, and *especially noticing the words of our Lord or our Lady, or any other words* which we select as the heavenly manna out of which we shall try next morning to draw refreshing nourishment. We must, I say, carefully note the words; because it is not sufficient to know in a loose way the sense of what our Lord says; for there is a grace and virtue and food for our hearts in the very words that come from His mouth. *Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (St. Matt. iv.).

*Overnight.*—II. In the next place, as St. Ignatius' method of contemplating is, we may say, realistic, we must also overnight try, as well as we can, to picture to ourselves the place where the scene selected for tomorrow's contemplation was enacted. St. Ignatius would have our representation to be as true and real as may be. He directs us to think whether the roads be level or hilly, narrow or broad, etc. He went himself to the Holy Land to note carefully all the different places where our Blessed Saviour worked or suffered. He marked carefully the height, the length, and breadth of the cave or grotto of the Nativity. He nearly lost his life in an attempt to ascertain the direction of our Saviour's footprints on Mount Olivet. Any such representations as the Passion Play, or a good panorama of Jerusalem—if correct and faithful and reverent—would be a help to contemplation

<sup>1</sup> *Contemplation*, as distinguished from *meditation*, has to do, according to St. Ignatius, with scenes of our Lord's Life. Some commentators on his Spiritual Exercises have elaborated much detail as a development of his simple methods. "Omnis spiritus laudat Dominum" (1 Psalm cl.).

according to the method of St. Ignatius. He knew that virtue comes out from our Lord to us, and that as we cannot now see Him with our bodily eyes, we ought to employ the eyes of our imagination, which have often done us so much harm, to help us to gain more knowledge and more love of our Divine Master.

We shall value this method of contemplation more highly if we call to mind how prone we all are to imitation. The Prophet Isaiah tells us that we all go astray *like sheep* (Isaiah liii.); that is, by following a leader. Children imitate their parents, servants their master and mistresses.

If, then, the Holy Family were now living near us, and a mother took her children to visit our Lady just when they are in the full glow of youth, they might possibly begin to give her in a loud voice and with much excitement the news of the day, the account of the last race or the late great wedding. She would listen kindly, and answer gently; but before long the loud voice of the young visitors would certainly begin to be toned down to hers. At the end of the visit, they would probably say to their mother one of two things—either, (1) “Do not bring us here any more, it is so dull”; or (2), “Do please bring us very soon again to see this Holy Mother; she is so kind and so gracious”. If they come often, gradually they will unconsciously imitate her tone of voice, her gentle manner, perhaps her simplicity of dress. They are beginning to *know*, to *love*, and to *imitate*.

As we cannot now find the Holy Family on earth, we go back *in spirit* to the scenes of our Saviour's Life and Death, and try, as far as we can, to gain the fruits that would have come through our eyes and ears were they present to our senses.

St. Ignatius, then, considers it of much importance that we bring these sacred scenes before us in an easy and natural way; and therefore, because he knew that too constrained a position of body might hinder our endeavours to gaze familiarly on the pictures of our Lord's Life and Death, he tells us that we must not think it obligatory always to kneel, but can choose that position in which we find it most easy to represent to ourselves the sacred scene.

As few have travelled to the Holy Land as he did, we can only help ourselves with books and pictures, and fashion

for ourselves the Garden, or the Supper-room, or the other sacred places, as best we may.<sup>1</sup>

*Overnight*.—III. After we retire to rest, St. Ignatius would have us recall before we fall asleep, *for the space of an Ave Maria*, the scene we are to contemplate in the morning, in the hope that it may be the last image on our minds.

*Morning*.—I. When we wake in the morning, he bids us turn at once to the scene selected for our contemplation before other distracting thoughts gain an entrance; and while washing and dressing, we are to try, by ejaculations or by reciting favourite vocal prayers, or in any other way that suits us, to keep congenial thoughts in our minds and shut out thoughts and images that would distract. We know by sad experience how much an annoying letter or the remembrance of some imagined insult might hinder a contemplation.

*Morning*.—II. *At the time of contemplation*.—When the hour of our contemplation is come, he would have us, if we are in private in our rooms, before we kneel down or take our position, do something like what visitors occasionally do before they enter into a room filled with distinguished company; they pause a while to see if their dress is all in good order. Even so, the Saint directs us to halt at a pace or two from the place in our room where we intend to contemplate, and there standing, make an act of faith in God's presence, and, if it helps us, make some outward act of reverence, such as a genuflection or bowing of the head. This is to secure a good beginning, which, as the proverb says, is half the work.

*Morning*.—III. *At the time of contemplation*.—In the next place, the Saint directs us to take that position which we judge most suitable to our work; kneeling, standing, sitting, prostrate on our face, as our Lord played in the Garden, or lying on the ground on our backs—in fact, choosing honestly and sincerely that position in which we think we can best gain *id quod volo*—“*the fruit I desire*”;

<sup>1</sup>Overnight, then, we do not begin to make our contemplation, but merely fix clearly the subject, the fruit, and the composition of place; we are not to begin to eat our dinner, but only to prepare the dishes carefully. Though at the same time it is true that if, during the day, we read about our Lord's Life, and are interested in it, and become full of the subject, it will be more easy next morning to fix our minds on the scene selected for contemplation.

that is to say, that position in which I can best use my natural powers and win the graces I wish for.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, we must be honest and sincere; for if we choose a position simply because it is more comfortable, the result might be merely drowsiness, not contemplation. Note also, that if we choose an unusual position to which we are not accustomed, it may prove not helpful, but a hindrance.

*Morning.*—IV. *At the time of contemplation.*—Our position chosen, we are to make the following Preparatory Prayer, which never varies: *Grant me grace, O God my Lord, that all my intentions and (bodily) actions and (mental) operations may be directed purely to the service and praise of Thy Divine Majesty.* The Saint knew that we might come to contemplate with any one of many different intentions—possibly, for the pleasure of a mental study, or to obtain some sensible consolation; or, if skilled in painting, because we wish afterwards to paint the scene; or because we are going to preach about it; or because we are properly desirous of gaining some spiritual good for ourselves. These motives might be good, but he wishes to teach us a *more excellent way*. If we contemplate purely in order to serve and please the Divine Majesty, our work is changed from copper or silver into good gold.

By our *intentions*, he means the aims and desires of our hearts. By *operations*, the work of our mental faculties, the memory, understanding, will, affections, and imagination. By *actions*, our bodily movements, change of position, etc.

*Morning.*—V. *During the contemplation.*—*The Preludes.*—After this Preparatory Prayer, which, as has been said, does not vary, he recommends, as helps to the coming contemplation, *three Preludes*, which vary with the matter of our contemplation.

*First Prelude.*—*The subject.*—Shortly, for a minute or thereabouts, we recall the subject prepared last night. In a picture-gallery, if we meet with a striking picture never seen before, we at once ask, What is the subject? So in the beginning of the contemplation, if we wish to proceed in an orderly way, we naturally for a moment set before our minds the story and the points selected the night before.

<sup>1</sup> St. Ignatius does not mention *walking* as one of the suitable positions for contemplation; because, except for privileged saints who can pray always and in all circumstances, to contemplate while ~~walking~~ is extremely difficult.

*Second Prelude.*—*The composition of place.*—We recall for a moment the picture or place arranged the night before—the room or garden which we fixed upon.

*Third Prelude.*—*The petition for the fruit desired.*—Before beginning the contemplation, we are to pray earnestly, for a short while, for the special grace we wish to draw from this present contemplation. This petition varies with the subject. In ordinary contemplations on the Life of our Lord, my petition, according to St. Ignatius, must be for “an inward knowledge of our Lord made Man for me, in order that I may love Him more, and more closely follow Him.”<sup>1</sup> St. Ignatius means an intimate knowledge of our Blessed Saviour that brings with it a great relish for all His thoughts and words and works.

Some one has expressed this petition in rhyme:

To know Him more clearly,  
To love Him more dearly,  
To follow Him nearly.

When we are contemplating the Passion of our Lord, St. Ignatius directs us to play in the third prelude for *sorrow, feeling, confusion*, that my Lord is going to suffer, or is suffering, for me; sorrow with Christ sorrowful; crushing prostration with Christ crushed and prostrate; tears and internal pain on account of the pain my Saviour is suffering for me.

It would be a mistake to seek in the Passion only for tender emotions. This would not be true *compassion*. Compassion means suffering with Christ, sharing what He is enduring. “Passion of Christ, strengthen me.” The valiant woman, we read, puts out *her hand to strong things* (Prov. xxxi.). So must we desire strong things; strong hope against difficulties, and strong love willing to suffer for our Lord, not merely passing nervous emotions.

<sup>1</sup> *To know Him, to love Him, to follow Him.* Observe the order. It would be hard to imitate our Lord if we did not love Him, and His yoke would then not be sweet nor His burden light, but very heavy and oppressive. Moreover, we cannot love our Lord unless we know Him. The p-or people who followed Him and saw His character loved Him so well that they went without food in order to stay with Him. It is very important to acquire by correct and careful contemplation true ideas concerning our Blessed Saviour. For the same purpose it is highly useful to read Lives of our Lord that have been prepared with much care and study and prayer, such as the Life by Ludolf and that by Father Coleridge, and others.

*The Contemplation.*—After the three preludes we now come to the contemplation, the method of which has been already explained:

1. *Look at the persons.* We look at our Lord or His Mother; consider their outward demeanour, and try to read their inward thoughts; and then reflect on ourselves, and see if we can gain any fruit.

2. *Listen to the words spoken.* We weigh them well, and reflect on ourselves and see what spiritual fruit we can gain from them.

3. *Watch the actions.* We watch what is done to our Lord or by Him, and reflect on ourselves to see what we must do, etc.

IV. These three topics or points: *Persons, words, actions*, are like three dishes set before us at a meal. We are not obliged to partake of all. We can select any one, and if there we find the nourishment we want, we need not go further.

Neither is it essential that we take these three points in the order in which they here stand, we may sometimes find it more convenient to begin with *words* or *actions*.

But observe well, that it is an essential part of St. Ignatius' method of contemplation to look carefully at the scene selected, and to listen to the words spoken, before we begin to reflect upon ourselves. If instead of looking at our Saviour and listening to Him, we begin at once to look at our miserable selves and brood over our wretchedness, virtue cannot come out from Him to us. Some books which profess to follow the plan of St. Ignatius, do not sufficiently present the scenes, but rather propose a meditation on humility or poverty or some other abstract virtue.

N.B. *Additional points when contemplating the Sacred Passion.*—In order to help us to stay longer on the Sacred Passion and draw more fruit from it, St. Ignatius adds three other points or topics, or, to keep to the comparison which has been already used, he sets three other dishes before our souls, to be used if we consider them more suitable.

A. *Fourth Point.*—Sometimes we may spend our time most profitably in trying to understand and realise how much and in how many different ways our Blessed Saviour is suffering; e.g., in His head, His eyes, His mouth, etc.;

in His honour, in the feelings of His Heart; from His enemies; from weak friends; from strangers; from His own; from the devil, etc., and then try with great earnestness to rouse ourselves to grief and sorrow, and to lament with Him.

B. *Fifth Point.*—Or we may spend the time in thinking how voluntary our Lord's sufferings are; how His Divinity is hidden in the background in order that He may suffer; how He could instantly set Himself free and destroy all His enemies, and will not; but allows His Sacred Soul and Body to suffer so cruelly. This thought brings out the courage and strength of our Lord's love. For many holy persons when enduring pain, though they are resigned, yet if they can by any lawful remedy get relief, gladly do so. Our Blessed Saviour goes much beyond this. He chooses and prefers to suffer, when He could at once deliver Himself.

C. *Sixth Point.*—Lastly, we may fix our minds and hearts on this great and overwhelming truth, *My Lord is suffering all this for me and for my sins. What ought I to do and suffer for Him?*

*He loved me and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.). A spiritual writer has said that the day on which I begin to believe firmly and realise that our Lord loved me personally, and suffered and died for me, is a very blessed day in our Calendar, a new birthday. And yet it ought not to be so difficult to believe and realise this truth, for the Blessed Eucharist brings home to us how our Blessed Saviour gives Himself and all His Life and Death to each of us:

Sumit unus, sumunt mille,  
Quantum isti, tantum ille.

A thousand do not receive more than one.

As He is in the Blessed Eucharist whole and entire for each of us, so in His Sacred Passion, it is all for me. *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.).

*For me*—to atone for my sins, to move His Father to forgive my sins.

*For me*—to rescue me from all that would come upon me in eternity if I were to give myself up to be the slave of Satan.

*For me*—to make it clear to me what an evil sin is, and to move me to do penance for past sins, and strive earnestly to avoid future sin.

*For me*—to give *me* great hope and courage; seeing that He has redeemed *me* abundantly, and that all His Sacred Passion is added to *my* poor prayers and weak desires.

*For me*—to draw *me* to thanksgiving and to love for Him and His Sacred Heart and His Blessed Mother.

*For me*—to open my eyes as to the worth of a soul, to rouse within me a zeal to help poor sinners.

*N.B. Points.*—Observe here that St Ignatius gives the name of *Points* to these topics—*persons, words, actions, and the three other topics* just mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever scene, therefore, of the Passion we may be studying, these *six points*, or, as they have been already called, these *six dishes* are presented to us. We may confine ourselves to one of them, or use more, as we find ourselves disposed.

In many books of meditation which profess to follow the method of St Ignatius, the word *point* is used in a different sense, namely, to signify one of the parts into which the story of the scene is subdivided. For instance, in proposing the contemplation on the Nativity, they call the journey the *first point*; the *second point*, what passed in the stable; the *third point*, the apparition of angels to the shepherds.

This use of the word in two senses may produce some confusion.<sup>2</sup> As therefore in the Way of the Cross, we call each division of the story a *station* or *halting-place*, this word has been borrowed and used all through the following chapters, to point out to the reader any sentence or incident at which they might halt to contemplate and gain some spiritual fruit. So that the story will be divided into *scenes*; and the scenes subdivided into *stations* for the use of those who wish to contemplate.

*Colloquy 1.*—This remains to be said with regard to contemplation, that when we are, in ordinary social life, contemplating, in the familiar way already described, at an entertainment or any other assembly of our neighbours, *studying some person, listening to his words, or watching some action*, we often break silence ourselves, and address some

<sup>1</sup> A painter teaching his pupils might direct them to notice in all paintings—no matter what the subject—the *drawing*, the *shading* and the *colouring*. So St. Ignatius teaches us to notice in all the scenes of our Saviour's Life the *persons, words, actions*.

<sup>2</sup> Some spiritual masters obviate this difficulty by calling St. Ignatius' topics *points of method*; and the historical scenes *points of matter*.

words to those near us. So we must also do in our contemplations of our Lord's Life and bitter Death. We must speak from our hearts either to Him or to our Blessed Lady, or to our Father in Heaven; at times also to some of the saints whose help we desire.

*Colloquy 2.*—In these colloquies we may speak, St. Ignatius says, sometimes as a friend to a friend, sometimes as a servant to a master—*sometimes reasoning with our Lord as to the difficulties we find in our weakness; sometimes begging for grace*, the grace that we see to be most necessary; grace to overcome some bad habit and acquire this virtue or that; grace to know how to dispose of ourselves and set our lives in order: *sometimes confessing our sins and blaming ourselves; sometimes asking counsel*.

The colloquy naturally varies according as we find ourselves in consolation, or in desolation and tempted; or again, according as the scene we are studying suggests joy or sorrow.

*Colloquy 3.*—We may make colloquies whenever so inclined during the contemplation, but we ought never to omit a colloquy, at least at the end.

*Colloquy 4.*—We can either make *one* colloquy to our Lady or to our Lord, or to God our Father; or, if we desire any grace very earnestly, we may use a *triple colloquy*, addressing first our Lady, and ending with an *Ave Maria*; then our Lord, and ending with the *Animus Christi*; lastly the Eternal Father, ending with the *Pater noster*. So that the contemplation ordinarily closes with the *Pater noster*.

*Colloquy 5.*—St. Ignatius adds this most useful advice with regard to colloquies, that whenever we find ourselves reluctant to make some sacrifice, we should ask of God earnestly not to yield to our reluctance, but in His mercy to require the sacrifice from us. We are not telling a lie by making such a prayer; we are only saying to God, "With my lower nature I dislike exceedingly this sacrifice, but still I have, through my faith, sense enough to see that what Thou wishest, O my God, is better than what I wish, and therefore, if it is Thy will that I make the offering, I say with our Lord—in the Garden: *My Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt*". And we ought to persevere in this cry till we can mean it thoroughly; for it is a terrible calamity if God in His displeasure allows our will to prevail against His.

*After the Contemplation, Reflection.*—St. Ignatius prescribes after the contemplation a little time for *Reflection* (during retreat, fifteen minutes; out of retreat, if we can get even five minutes, it will be useful).

*Reflection 1.*—is simply turning back to see whether we have done our work well or ill. A tailor sewing looks back occasionally to see if the stitches are all rightly made. A painter turns back to see if the drawing and colouring is all well done. A careful man, after writing an important letter, turns back, and reads it over again to see if the wording and spelling and punctuation are all correct.

Even so it is well worth our while to turn back at the end of a contemplation to see whether we have done our work well, if we have followed the method carefully, the preparation overnight and in the morning, the *Preparatory Prayer* and *Preludes*; if we have contemplated rightly the persons, words, actions; if we have availed ourselves in contemplating the Sacred Passion of the other three points; (4) *how much He is suffering*; (5) *how entirely voluntary His suffering is*; (6) *how this is all for me*.

We must also examine whether we have during the contemplation turned back upon ourselves, and tried to gain some fruit for our souls; whether we roused our will to good resolutions; and whether we have made fervent colloquies.

*Reflection 2.*—If we find that by God's blessing we have done all carefully and gained fruit, we must *take care to give God thanks*, and resolve to follow the same method faithfully the next time.

If we find that we have committed faults, or made mistakes, and not been successful, *we must be sorry*, and beg grace to do better.

*Reflection 3.*—St. Francis Xavier used to advise those whom he trained to keep a little diary of their contemplations, noting briefly some thought that made impression.

This practice has these advantages:

1. By writing down a thought in this way, we impress it on our memory, and it may remain with us during the day, serving much the same purpose as a little lavender which we carry with us out of a garden. The morning contemplation or meditation often gives a colour to the rest of the day. It puts new life into Holy Mass and Holy Communion; and the thought that we have laid

up may help very much to recollection during the day, and prove a good antidote against temptation. The Psalmist says: *Thy words I have hidden in my heart, that I may not sin* (Psalm cxviii.).

2. In after time, if the eye chances to rest on the entries in such a diary, a valuable thought that has been quite forgotten is brought back to the mind; and thoughts that have once impressed us in time past may more easily affect us now than a new thought.

3. Moreover, if in looking back we find that our contemplations used heretofore to succeed better than they are doing now, the discovery may act as a salutary stimulant.

4. The very fact of examining each day whether we have gained some fruit, and taking a note of it, helps to keep us alive to the necessity of getting some profit every day out of our contemplation.



# PART I. BEFORE.

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## CHAPTER II.

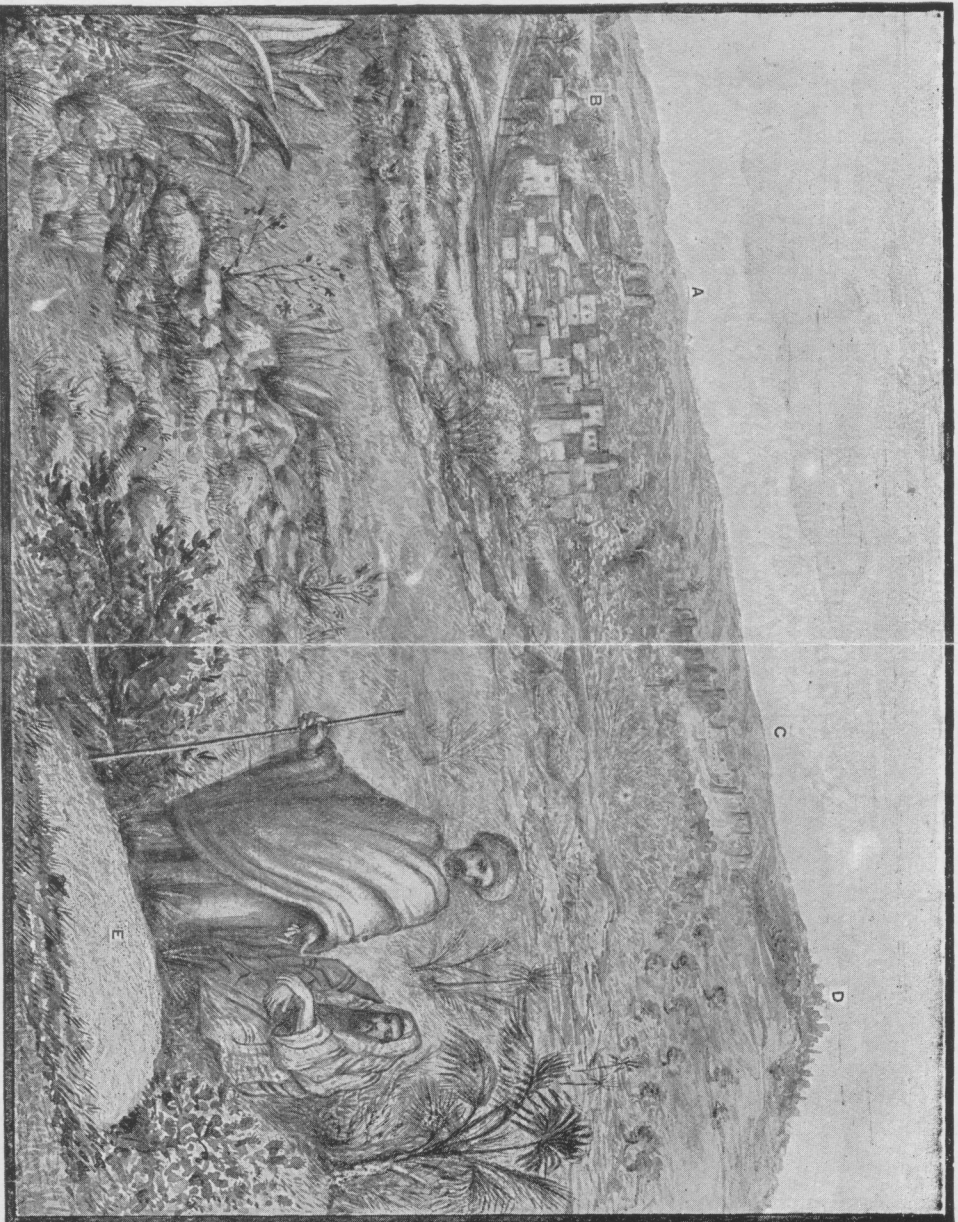
### THE EVENING OF OUR LORD'S LIFE ON EARTH From Mid-Lent to Passion-Week.

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#### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

THE raising of Lazarus was, to use a familiar phrase, "the beginning of the end" of our Blessed Lord's career on earth, and therefore we may fitly commence our study of the close of our Saviour's life from that wonderful miracle. If we adopt the commonly received tradition that the Crucifixion took place on Friday, the 25th of March, then we may either follow the opinion more generally held, that Lazarus was raised to life about three weeks earlier, that is, in the week before our Mid-Lent Sunday; or we may prefer a theory advanced by some modern English scholars, that this great miracle was wrought two months earlier, that is, in the week before our Septuagesima Sunday. We shall adhere in these pages to the more widespread tradition, because such traditions may fairly claim to be left in possession till really strong arguments are brought against them; and there do not seem to be any valid arguments against either the date assigned for the Crucifixion, or the date more commonly accepted for the raising of Lazarus—that is, two or three days before our Mid-Lent Sunday.

1. Against the day assigned to the Crucifixion, March the 25th, the strongest argument that is commonly alleged is, that according to the Law (Levit. xxiii. 10—15, and Deut. xvi. 9), *on the morrow after the (Paschal) Sabbath*, the first-fruits of the harvest were to be offered in the Temple. In Deuteronomy the time is specified as the day *wherein thou didst put the sickle to the corn*. Now, so certain critics argue, the earliest crop, which was the barley, was never ready for the sickle in Judea before the middle of April. Therefore, they conclude, the Paschal Sabbath could not be before the middle of April.



MOUNT OLIVET (EAST SIDE), BETHANY AND BETHPHAGE.

A.—BETHANY.

C.—BETHPHAGE.

D.—SUMMIT OF MOUNT OLIVET.

B.—TOMB OF LAZARUS.

E.—STONE OF CONFERENCE.

A very eminent Biblical scholar of the present day answers this difficulty by observing that when Moses wrote Leviticus and Deuteronomy, he was not in Jerusalem, or in the hill country of Judea, where the climate is colder and the harvest later; but on his way from Egypt, in warmer climates where the crops ripened early; and he moreover adds that if later the Priests in Jerusalem were bound to the letter of this Law, they would do as we do when we want palms for Palm Sunday. We get them from more favoured climes: so could the Jewish Priests have sheaves ready from warmer lands or from the sunny plains round Jericho or Joppa, in order to fulfil the precept of the Law.

2. Those who place the raising of Lazarus before Septuagesima do so because they wish to prove that after this miracle our Saviour made a last solemn progress through Samaria and Galilee, and then returned to suffer in Jerusalem. They consider that St. Luke is the only Evangelist who tells the story of this last solemn progress, and that the parables of the Prodigal Son, and the Rich Man, and the Healing of the Lepers, and other incidents which he alone records, belong to this last journey. What gives some colour to this theory is, that on the Good Friday the Jewish Rulers advanced this charge, among others, against Jesus: *He stirreth up the people, beginning from Galilee to this place* (St. Luke xxiii.). This accusation, the holders of this theory maintain, would have much more foundation and more weight if our Saviour had just been making His public progress through Galilee.

Whatever may be said in favour of this opinion, there is one argument against it to which we find no satisfactory answer. In St. Luke ix. we read that our Lord *steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*, and sent messengers into a city of the Samaritans to prepare for Him, but the Samaritans would not receive Him, *because His face was of one going to Jerusalem*.

The words seem to express very clearly that our Saviour was at the time travelling from Galilee southward to Jerusalem. Whereas they who believe in this last solemn progress are obliged to assume that He was then really travelling northward with His back to Jerusalem; but, they add, it was publicly known that He intended to come back to Jerusalem, and therefore the Evangelist writes that *His face was of one going to Jerusalem*. It seems more easy to adhere to the common opinion than to receive this strained interpretation.

We may therefore suppose that we are commencing our study of our Lord's last days on earth about three weeks before the first Good Friday.

All are, I think, agreed that the raising of Lazarus was "the beginning of the end"; as it was immediately after this great miracle that the Priests and Ancients adopted the ruling of Caiphas, that *one Man should die for the people* (St. John xi.), and began in good earnest to compass His Death.

SCENE I.  
LAZARUS SICK AT BETHANY.

*There was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister (St. John xi. 1).*

1. There were two towns called Bethany, one beyond the Jordan, the other, the home of Lazarus, situated about two miles, by the high road, from Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. This hill, therefore, which lies along the eastern side of Jerusalem, hides Bethany from the Holy City. The high road goes round the southern base of the hill. A shorter, but exceedingly rough bridle path leads from Getsemani over the Mount of Olives to Bethania. By this path a good walker could go in about three quarters of an hour from the eastern gate of Jerusalem, commonly known as St. Stephen's gate, to the home of Lazarus. Our Blessed Saviour sometimes went by the high road, sometimes over the Mount of Olives.

STATION I.—*In the Sick-room at Bethany.*

*There was a certain man sick named Lazarus (v. 1).*

A. *It is good for us to be here, in this sick chamber. It is better to go to (this) house of mourning than to the house of feasting: for in this (house) we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come (Eccles. vii.).*  
*"O vos omnes"—O all you who go by the way, stay a little while in this sick-room, to see with your eyes, and to listen with your ears.*

*Look upon Lazarus, languens—weak and languid and weary and pale, with the signs of coming death upon him—but very patient. Listen: you hear no complaint from him. Watch his sisters Mary and Martha, how they nurse him most carefully, and from time to time turn away to hide from him their tears. St. Augustine writes: "He sick; they sorrowful; all beloved". St. Paul forewarns us that in the latter days there will be men without affection, without kindness (2 Timothy iii.). There is no want of affection or kindness in this blessed home.*

Listen to the words which Mary and Martha so often whisper to each other—"Would that He were here!" "Would that the Master were here!" "If the Master were here our brother would not die." Mark how all the while Jesus is with them unseen, hearing every sigh, giving heed to every wish of their hearts, pitying every tear. *I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and will glorify him (Psaln xc.).*

B. How great a blessing it is to have round our death-bed true friends, full of the spirit of Christian faith and charity, who take better care of our poor souls than of our bodies! Alas! they who forget God end by forgetting themselves also. They make no provision for the evil day. In life they choose to have a worldly and an un-blessed marriage, and now at death they are surrounded by nurses, by physicians, and by relatives who cannot possibly understand the spiritual requirements of a dying Catholic. There is not one to pity their souls in the hour of extreme need, nor one to say when all is over, O God, may eternal light shine upon him!

*Lazarus of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister (St. John xi. 1).* It is worth notice that where we have in our version the same word twice, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha, the Greek text uses two different words, *ἀνὰ* and *ἐκ*. And though some eminent Greek scholars attach no importance to this change in the words, yet there are circumstances which, if brought together, seem to make it probable that our version would be more correct if it also had two different words, and ran thus: "Lazarus of Bethania, from the town of Mary and Martha". The sense would then be: Lazarus, now of Bethania, but originally from the town of Mary and of Martha.

If this be the correct reading, where was the town of Mary and of Martha?

We find a clue to the answer in St. Luke's words, *Mary who is called Magdalen* (St. Luke viii.). Why was she called Magdalen? A very natural answer presents itself. Because she was a native of Magdala, a fishing village in Galilee, on the north-west side of the Lake of Genesareth, below Capernaum and Bethsaida.

If these surmises be correct, then Lazarus was originally a Galilean from Magdala, but subsequently settled in Bethania; or probably had a home in both places. There are many words in the Gospel narrative which fit in well with this supposition.

1. For in the first place Mary Magdalen was not poor. She was one of those who with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and many others, ministered unto (our Lord) of their substance (St. Luke viii.). Therefore it might well be that, like others, she and her brother had a home in Galilee, and one also near Jerusalem. Tradition tells us, for instance, of St. Joachim and St. Anne that they had a home at Sephoris in Galilee, a home also at Nazareth, and also a home in Jerusalem. The Fathers who belong to the Congregation founded for Africa by Cardinal Lavergne, and who are known in Jerusalem as *les Pères Blancs*, claim to have in Jerusalem the sanctuary in which the Immaculate Conception of our Lady took place, and where Holy Mary was born. There is also a tradition that some part, at least, of the farm, or garden, at Gethsemani belonged to St. Joachim and St. Anne, and afterwards to our Lady, and that the family sepulchre was there where the church now stands.

2. Again, in St. Luke viii. we find St. Mary Magdalen coupled with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and ministering to our Lord in Galilee. As Herod was Tetrarch, or King, of Galilee, this points also to the inference that Mary was one of the devout women who followed our Lord from Galilee.

3. Again, it seems tolerably clear from St. Luke vii. that Magdalen's forgiveness in the house of Simon the Pharisee took place in Galilee; at Magdala, as some think, or, according to others, at Naim. For in the same chapter we find our Lord at Capernaum, and at Naim, and again, in St. Luke viii., crossing the Lake of Genesareth. We also find the messengers arriving who had been sent by John the Baptist, who was at that time imprisoned in Galilee by Herod.

4. Then, too, we twice find St. Mary Magdalen anointing our Lord's feet at a banquet; and we moreover find Martha serving at the supper in the house of Simon the leper. All this would be more intelligible if the owner of the houses were a kinsman of Mary and Martha; and accordingly we find Theophylact, early in the seventh century, recording a tradition to this effect: "Some say the leper was the father of Lazarus". And as this Simon also was evidently a man of some substance, there is no improbability in the conjecture that he too had a home in Galilee and a home near Jerusalem, and that in fact, Simon the Pharisee, whose house was in Galilee, was no other than Simon the leper of Bethany, who had been cured by our Lord, and was therefore grateful not only for the raising of Lazarus, but also for his own cure.

5. Again, this conjecture, or theory, fits in well with the known fact that our Lord's disciples were drawn mainly from

Galilee. It is said that Judas Iscariot (or of Kerioth) was the only one of the twelve Apostles who was a native of Judea. All the others were from Galilee, four of them, if not five, cousins of our Blessed Saviour. In an essay written by the late Cardinal Wiseman, we read that our Lord spent two of the three years of His Public Life in Galilee, either on the Lake of Genesareth, or on the shores of that Lake, which, with its storms and its fishermen, was to His mind a picture of His future Church.

6. Lastly. One more circumstance which supports this view is that the house where Martha was busy about many things while Mary sat at the feet of her Master, was apparently in Galilee; for in the same chapter we find our Saviour apostrophizing as present, the villages of Bethsaida and Corozain and Capernaum, which are all in the neighbourhood of the Lake of Genesareth.

*And Mary was she who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair* (St. John xi. 2).

We, Catholics, commonly take it for granted, and with Holy Church's sanction, that the penitent who washed the feet of our Lord with her tears in the house of Simon the Pharisee and anointed them with her fragrant ointment (St. Luke vii.), was no other than this Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who, soon after, a second time anointed our Lord in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. Some critics in this country and elsewhere hold that we have no good ground for our opinion. If it were certain that St. John was here alluding to the first anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee, this passage would end the controversy; but the adverse critics contend that it is not likely that St. John is alluding to a scene which he himself does not record in his Gospel, and which is only found in St. Luke. They therefore hold that in these words St. John has before his mind the second anointing at Bethany, which he has not indeed as yet mentioned, but which was described many years before in the Gospel of St. Matthew. As St. John did not write till thirty years after the raising of Lazarus, it is quite possible that he is alluding to the second anointing, which was perhaps better known among the disciples than the first. However this may be, the sense of the faithful is, and has been, that St. Luke's penitent, who was forgiven in the house of Simon the Pharisee (St. Luke vii.), and St. Luke's Mary, who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth (St. Luke viii.), and St. John's Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha, are all one, and the same holy person, and we would rather think with all the faithful so long as we may, that is, until their judgment is proved erroneous. The mind of Holy Church on this point seems to be clear. For the Saint Magdalen honoured by the Church is doubtless the Mary of Bethany whose devotion, our Lord foretold, shall be preached wherever His Gospel is preached (St. Matt. xxvii.). But, in the Mass for St. Magdalen's day, the Gospel read is St. Luke's story of the conversion of the

penitent. This surely implies that Holy Church considers Mary the sister of Lazarus and St. Luke's penitent to be the same person. *His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick* (St. John xi. 3).

Where was our Lord when this message was sent to Him? We can answer this question from the preceding chapter of St. John's Gospel. We are now, according to our reckoning, in the beginning of the month of March. In the previous December Jesus was in Jerusalem. *It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch* (St. John x. 22). In the course of His preaching on this occasion He uttered the words, *I and the Father are One*. Whereupon, *the Jews took up stones to stone Him*. Our Lord reasoned with them mildly to show them that He was not blaspheming; but when He said, *If I do (the works of My Father) though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father, they sought to take Him; and He escaped out of their hands* (x. 39). *And He went again beyond the Jordan into that place where John was baptising first; and there He abode. And many resorted to Him, and they said: John intled did no sign. But all things whateerer John said of this Man were true: and many believed in Him* (x. 42). Our Blessed Lord is therefore about forty miles distant from Bethany, beyond Jericho and beyond the Jordan, at a small town, as commentators tell us, called Behabara, which is supposed to have stood near the eastern bank of the Jordan, opposite that Monastery of St. John on the western bank which the schismatic Greeks occupy at present.

Here, then, our Blessed Saviour is teaching and converting many, when the messengers are sent to Him from Bethany. It may be worth while at this point to interrupt the narrative for a little while, in order to understand why our Saviour thus takes refuge beyond the Jordan.

After the short and glorious career of Judas Machabeus and his brothers, their descendants, known as the Asmonean princes, struggled in vain against the enemies who surrounded Judea. At length the Romans, called in, probably, by one of the contending factions, gained a footing in Judea under Crassus and Pompey the Great. From that time Jewish princes were carried off as hostages to Rome and there educated, and were at times advanced to greatness by Roman favour. Lineal descent and legitimate title was not always respected. Through the influence of Mark Antony, Herod, who was not a Jew, but an Idumean, and had no title whatever to royalty, was declared King of Judea and Galilee and the country beyond the Jordan. This clever and most unscrupulous man became famous in Jewish history as Herod the Great. In his greatness he was not unlike our King Henry VIII. He was great in his crimes as well as in other ways. He had more wives than our King Henry. One

of them, the unfortunate Mariamne, he murdered; and then consoled his grief by building a tower in her honour in Jerusalem. With her he also murdered her two children. He was drawing near the end of his life when he ordered the Massacre of the Innocents. He had also planned, it is said, a wholesale butchery of the Jewish nobles in order to make sure that there should be much mourning at his death. To compensate in some way for his enormities, he strove to win popularity by adorning and enriching Jerusalem. On the west side of the city he built the gorgeous palace known as the Palace of Herod the Great. On the eastern side he rebuilt with great skill, and rendered well-nigh impregnable, the old fortress of the Machabees called Batis. He changed its name to Antonia, in honour of his patron, Mark Antony. Here it was that Pilate afterwards had his Prætorium. Herod also enlarged and rendered far more magnificent the Temple that stood on Mount Moriah, close to the fortress Antonia.

It is a disputed point whether he survived the Massacre of the Innocents only a few months or about four years. At his death he left behind him four sons, by three different mothers. Of these four sons one he disinherited. To Archelaus he left Judea; Galilee to Herod Antipas; Iturea and the country of Trachonitis to Philip (St. Luke iii. 1). Archelaus inherited his father's thirst for blood, and in consequence of his cruelties was deposed by the Romans, who thereupon seized his kingdom of Judea and annexed it to their province of Syria. Herod Antipas also inherited a large share of his father's wickedness. He it was that seduced Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip,<sup>1</sup> and to please her put St. John the Baptist to death, and afterwards mocked our Lord.

At the time, then, when Lazarus was sick, the kingdom of Herod the Great had been dismembered; and so, by crossing the Jordan, our Lord was out of the power of the Jews, and under another government.

## SCENE II.

### BEYOND THE JORDAN WHERE JESUS IS PREACHING.

#### STATION I.

*His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick* (St. John xi. 3).

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Stay a little while, you who pass by, to see and to listen. See our Lord surrounded by His Apostles and disciples when the messengers arrive

<sup>1</sup> Not Philip the Tetrarch, but the other Philip, the disinherited son.

much tired, for they have come in haste. Listen attentively to the words of the message, and, though our Blessed Saviour seems to hear it in calm tranquillity, try to realise how the humble prayer fills His compassionate Heart with tenderness and a most earnest desire to give speedy help to His suffering servants.

B. *He whom Thou lovest is sick.* Consider these words. The sorrowing sisters could have said, "He who loves Thee so well is sick," but theirs is a better prayer. Our Lord's Heart loves Lazarus infinitely more than Lazarus loves Him, though Lazarus is so faithful. There is always sure footing—the very surest—when we rest our hopes on our Lord's love for us.

C. And this is a prayer which we can all safely make. We cannot all say, with St. Peter, *Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee* (St. John xxi.), but each of us can say most truly of himself, *Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.* Often and often we ought to renew our faith in this glorious truth: *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.). So too there is not one of us who cannot say with our Lady, *He that is mighty hath done great things for me* (St. Luke i.).

D. Even when I have sinned, I can still say, *Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick*—or, is dead. For *Thou, O God, art gracious and true, patient, and ordering all things in mercy. For (even) if we sin we are Thine* (Wisdom xv.). It was, as St. Paul tells us, when we were sinners, *when we were enemies, that Christ died for us* (Romans v.). Therefore St. John, who so well understood the Heart of our Lord, writes: *My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.* Every one looks out for chances of exercising his own calling. Physicians make haste to houses where there is some one sick; undertakers only go to homes where one lies dead. Our Lord's special calling is, *to seek and to save that which was lost* (St. Luke xix.). It is by saving sinners that He earns His name of Jesus, which to Him is *a name above all names* (Philipp. ii.).

E. *He whom Thou lovest.* What a title! Where can I find one so full of hope and consolation? If, O Lord, my God, I am indeed he whom Thou lovest, well may I say to thy soul, "*Quare tristis es anima mea?*" *Why art thou sad, my soul? why dost thou trouble me?*

O yes, blessed St. Mary Magdalen and blessed St. Martha acted most wisely to shape their prayer as they did. Had they said, "We have loved Thee well, O Lord, and Lazarus our brother has been devoted to Thee," this would have been a good prayer; but He was with them by the sick-bed, and was prompting their petition according to His own Heart. "Thou lovest our brother, dear Master, and for Thy own sake Thou wilt be good to him." In that prayer which had such power in Heaven, Daniel, the man of desires, makes his strong appeal in the same way. *O Lord, hear; O Lord, be appeased; hearken and do: delay not for Thy own sake* (c. ix.).

F. Observe too how they ask for nothing. They would say to one another as they were framing their message, "We have no need to ask". For their thought concerning their Master was the one that St. Augustine expresses: "Our Lord Jesus does not love and forsake".

G. Contemplate the intense compassion of our Saviour's Sacred Heart, while He is listening to the message; the consolation that His faithful servants give Him by their trust in Him; and how He yearns to grant them instant help, though He seems for the time to do nothing.

#### STATION II.

*And Jesus, hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it* (v. 4).

A. He said to them—that is, to the messengers from Mary and Martha—*This sickness is for the glory of God.* The sick and the sorrowful and the suffering so often jump to the conclusion, "This trouble is sent me as a chastisement," and they despond. So too we are apt to judge of other sufferers. Thus, when the disciples saw the man born blind, they at once asked: *Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his father, that he should be born blind?* (St. John ix.). We come into the world with a disease, or

insanity, upon us which inclines us always to believe without doubting that riches, honour, and pleasures are great blessings, and marks of God's special favour; and on the other hand, that poverty, sickness, pain, and disgrace, are always curses, and a chastisement of sin. It takes a long time and much labour, and a strong grace, to convince us that if for Himself and His Mother our Lord selected poverty and pain and the bitter chalice, these things must surely be something better than curses.

B. *This sickness is not unto death.* Even when sickness is sent as a chastisement, it is not always God's wish that it should be unto death. If the sick man would make haste to have recourse to God, and beg for absolution and the holy anointing, the sickness would oftentimes not be unto death. For as soon as sin is forgiven and the cause thus removed, then, as St. James tells us, *the prayer of faith shall save the (anointed) sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up*, and, as Holy Church prays, he will be restored safe and sound to his former duties in all that prosperity which he desires, and his friends desire for him.

C. *This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God.* What a golden lesson for the sick! This sickness is sent that the Son of God may be glorified in you. You would prefer health; but you will give great glory to your Creator and your Father in Heaven if you reverently say, *Father, not my will, but Thine be done.*

Fix well in your mind how very much our Lord is glorified by the patience of the sick and the charity of those who nurse.

### STATION III.

*Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus*  
(v. 5).

A. That is with a special love. His love for us all is so unbounded and so far beyond our imaginings that none of us need be envious. But still, how blessed are

they who attract a special predilection from the Heart of Jesus!

Innocence attracts. His Sacred Heart. So, too, does loving contrition.

Innocence has been compared by an ancient Father to a white robe; contrition to a robe rent and disfigured, but beautifully repaired with precious jewels.

The merciful who judge not also attract Him strongly.

Those, too, who abound in almsgiving are specially loved by Him.

Of St. Magdalen, our Blessed Lady told St. Bridget that the devils said of her: "How shall we win her back? We have lost a rich prize. She washes herself so thoroughly with the water of her tears that we dare not even fix our eyes upon her; and she is in the service of her God and in holiness so fervent, so inflamed, that we have not courage to go near her." What scares away the devils is precisely what attracts the Heart of our Lord, a loving and fervent contrition.

B. How good an ambition it is to desire to be loved by this special love of our Saviour! not to be content with being merely absolved, but to determine with Zaccheus to restore four-fold to all whom we have wronged, and if many sins have been forgiven, not to rest till we love much.

### STATION IV.

*When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days* (v. 6).

A. "Attendite." Pause a little while and note how calm our Lord seems outwardly; and yet He is doing great violence to His Sacred Heart, which is longing to give those whom He loves speedy comfort. A spiritual writer has said that God, being all charity, is infinitely more anxious to give blessings than a mother in labour is to bring forth her child. Mary and Martha did not think



it necessary to say, *O Lord, make haste to help me*. They knew that He needed not to be urged. His Heart is burning with desire to dry up their tears.

He is the same now; the same *Jesus yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever* (Hebrews xiii.). He is on fire with a most vehement wish to help sinners on earth and the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and to make haste to help them. And yet, much to His sorrow, He is often constrained to hold His hand, because we, not from having trust like Mary and Martha, but from apathy and sloth, neglect to importune Him, and so do not by our earnest prayers, or by some alms, or some act of penance, or by having the Holy Mass offered, give Him the necessary plea that enables Him to satisfy His compassion and loving mercy. To use our human language, He is counting the hours and the long minutes till that blessed moment shall arrive when to each suffering soul in Purgatory, He will be able to carry out His promise: *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more; for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.). At all hours of the day and night there are in Purgatory holy souls very near their moment of deliverance. One short, fervent, indulgent ejaculation may complete their work of purification. If it only cuts off but one minute of their time, yet how intense their gratitude will be! For one minute in Purgatory does not fly by as our minutes do here in this world.

B. Whenever, then, our Blessed Lord seems to be slow in sending us the help we ask Him, we may be sure that His Sacred Heart is constrained by reasons of mercy. He delays, only to give later greater gifts, and He says to us: *What I do you know not now, but you will know hereafter* (St. John xiii.).

## STATION V.

*Then after that, He said to His disciples: Let us go into Judaea again. The disciples say to Him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goss Thou thither again?* (vv. 7, 8).

A. Contemplate the persevering constancy of our Blessed Saviour in His work of love: how, again and again, He faces danger for our sake. We say that a burnt child dreads the fire: and assuredly, if we ourselves meet with some sufferings in the service of Christ, we are apt to turn faint-hearted and abandon our good work. Note how even Pagan masters reprove this cowardice, and say to us:

*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito—*

Do not basely run away.

Stand your ground and win the day.

St. Paul and St. Francis Xavier were men of our weak flesh and blood, but the grace of Jesus Christ so strengthened them, that when crosses were set before them, their response was: *Amplius, Domine, amplius*—"Yet more, O Lord, yet more".

B. On the other hand, there is a wise and holy timidity. Our good Angel, if he could win a hearing, would sometimes say to us: "Child of God, Satan but now overthrew you, are you going again so soon into that same terrible danger?"

## STATION VI.

*Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: but if he walk in the night he stumbleth* (vv. 9, 10).

A. Words akin to these our Blessed Saviour had said before, when about to cure the man born blind (St. John ix.): *I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work*.

During the time appointed by His Father, our Lord can work safely, as men do in the daylight. His enemies plot in vain: *Evil shall not come near Thee* (Psalm xc.). But when the hour appointed for the Passion arrived, He said: *It is your hour and the power of darkness* (St. Luke xxii.). The night was now come and He was in danger. So can God well protect us also during our allotted working-day.

B. *The night cometh when no man can work.* In health it is easy to pray and to do penance. When sickness comes and death is near, prayer and penance are much more difficult. Father Nierenberg advises us, in his book on *Adoration in Spirit and in Truth*, not only to pray while in health for present wants, but also to lay up then a store for the time when we shall not be able to pray.

C. *The night cometh when no man can work.* In Purgatory we can earn no more. Our suffering there is sterile. It pays our debts, but wins no increase of grace or merit; while here on earth every little act of penance or charity is a good seed that bears much fruit. *If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them* (St. John xiii.). Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

## STATION VII.

*These things He said, and after that He said to them: Lazarus, our friend, sleepest, but I go that I may wake him out of sleep* (v. 11).

A. *Lazarus, our friend.* Stay a little while to think of the loving spirit of our Lord: how He identifies Himself with His Apostles and has all in common with them. His friend is *our friend*. The same loving spirit we see afterwards in His message: *Go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God* (St. John xx.). For He is the real good Father Who says to each of His children who will stay with Him: *Son, all that I have is thine* (St. Luke xv.). My friend

is your friend, and your friend is My friend. Whoever is not a friend to you, cannot be a friend of Mine.

B. Some profess to have much love for our Lord, but a strong dislike for men. We hear them say that dogs and horses are more loveable than Christians. Against such thoughts we must have ready the words of St. John, who so well understood all about love: *He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God Whom he seeth not?* (1 St. John iv.). The love of God and love for men must both come down from Heaven; and the ordinary rule is, that it is by loving men we grow in love for God.

C. Again, some who profess to love our Lord are very kind to one priest, to one church, to one nun, or to a very small select party of lay people, but cold and indifferent, if not harsh, to those outside this narrow pale. One whose heart is becoming more like the Heart of our Saviour will, on the contrary, say, *I am partner* (O Lord) *with all them that fear Thee and keep Thy commandments* (Psalm cxviii.). St. Paul's heart became much like to our Lords; he therefore could weep with all who wept, and rejoice with those in joy. *Who is weak and I am not weak? who is scandalised and I am not on fire?* (2 Cor. xi.).

Fac cor a Trans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

Make us, loving Heart of Jesus, love Thee, and for Thy sake all whom Thou lovest. Grant us some share of Thy true and wide-reaching love, that we may be able to say humbly and in simplicity, *All Thy friends, O Lord, are my friends.*

## STATION VIII.

*Lazarus, our friend, sleepest, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples, therefore, said, Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep* (vv. 12, 13).

A. Why does our Lord so often use words, that may mislead, and do mislead?

One reason is to teach us all not to trust too much to the first hasty impressions on our short-sighted minds. How many false religions, and what numberless blaspemies against revelation, have their origin in the prevailing habit of pronouncing hastily and oracularly, "My judgment must be true. I think this text means black. Therefore it must be so." "But have you studied Holy Scripture much?" "No." "Have you gone through an education in order to understand God's Word?" "No." "Have you collated book with book? Have you consulted masters?" "No, nothing of all this." "Then, is there not at least a possibility of your being mistaken?" If once a man can be brought to modesty of mind, and will say humbly, "I may be wrong," he will scarcely become a heretic or sceptic.

Moreover, when our Lord speaks He always speaks truth; but He has told us by His Prophet, *My thoughts are not your thoughts* (Isaiah lv.). With God words have often a true meaning which we do not at once discern. Thus what our Lord calls "peace" is not what this world calls peace. So too time with us, and time with God, are things widely different. *One day with the Lord is as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day* (2 St. Peter iii.). One night of pain here is exceedingly long to the sufferer. Whereas St. Paul, who had seen a glimpse of the eternal home, speaks of present tribulations as *light and momentary* (2 Cor. iv.).

We continually give to things names which God does not give them. *You that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter* (Isaiah v.).

So therefore, as the dead shall rise again, the death of a just man, such as Lazarus, can only be in the mind of our Lord a short sleep.

## STATION IX.

*Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead*  
(v. 14).

A. From these words we learn that though He is beyond Jordan, His eye is seeing all that goes on in the sick-chamber at Bethany, and He hears every word. The message brought to Him was, "Lazarus is sick". Jesus now says, without any fresh tidings, *Lazarus is dead*. We must try to believe more and more firmly, and to rejoice in our belief, that our Lord sees every work and every thought of ours. *If I ascend into Heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into Hell, Thou art present. And I said: Perhaps darkness shall cover me. But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be as the light of day: the darkness thereof and the light thereof are alike to Thee. . . . My bone is not hidden from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret. Thy eyes did see my imperfect being, and in Thy book all shall be written* (Psalm cxxxviii.). Again, when the sinner says: *Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me. Whom do I fear? For the Most High will not remember my sins, the Holy Ghost answers: And he knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep; and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts. For all things were known to the Lord before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beheldeth all things* (Ecclesi. xxiii.).

## STATION X.

*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe, but let us go to him* (v. 15).

A. We now see the reason why our Blessed Saviour, notwithstanding the pleadings of His Sacred Heart, tarried two days before setting out for Bethany: in order to help forward the imperfect faith of His disciples. He would

raise the dead rather than heal the sick. He intends this to be a very great and striking miracle which shall arouse men's minds and bring grace to many. Therefore, for the good of many, He permits Mary and Martha to suffer for a little time longer; but no doubt speaks meanwhile words of comfort to their hearts in secret. *Who is like the Lord our God?* (Psaln cxii.). *The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works* (Psaln cxlv.). *Yet a little, and a very little while, and He that is to come, will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews x.).

### STATION XI.

*Thomas, therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go that we may die with Him* (v. 16).

Thomas was called Didymus either because he was a twin, or the descendant of some one who was a twin, and so the name was handed down as a family name. A holy writer observes that on this occasion he showed for our Lord a strong affection, as of a twin brother; for the others, as we see in verse 8, were alarmed at the idea of our Saviour's going again into Judea.

A. *Let us also go, that we may die with Him.* Thomas did not then realise how strong a grace is needed to strengthen a martyr for death. He afterwards learned the truth of our Lord's teaching: *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Are we then to undervalue such good desires as those of St. Thomas? Far from it. For if the flesh is weak, and if its cowardice sometimes prevails even when the spirit is willing, it will reign supreme and unopposed if we do not at least go as far as good desires. Good desires begin the work. If we persevere in prayer, the good desires grow, till at last they are strong enough for the work they have to do, which is to bear away by holy violence the grace of perseverance and the eternal possession of the Kingdom of Heaven. True, if good desires are not nursed and strengthened, they become blighted blossoms,

and the proverb says that Hell is paved with such blighted good wishes; but if all good desires were valueless, the Angel of God would not have come to Daniel bringing such glad tidings, *because thou art a man of desires* (c. x.).

Every good desire helps the work of the Church. If we say from our hearts, *Thy Kingdom come*, this desire helps the spread of grace, according to its fervour. If we say, "Eternal light shine upon them," this cry is heard, and full value is given to it. With what contrition shall we mourn in Purgatory that we did not multiply and intensify our good desires! At all hours, in all places, we had at our command this way of giving alms to the living and the dead; and we may say, giving alms also to our God, for if we give peace to men, we always give at the same time glory and joy to God.

### SCENE III.

BETHANY.

#### THE STONE OF CONFERENCE.<sup>1</sup>

STATION I.

*Jesus, therefore, came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off* (vv. 17, 18).

A. Lazarus died on the day that the message arrived. Jesus stayed after that two days; and now travels slowly, spending two days between the Jordan and Bethania, a distance of about forty miles.

Contemplate our blessed Saviour travelling on foot, with His disciples around Him, carrying with Him all His possessions—"all," being very little. *He said to them: Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither two coats* (St. Luke ix.). *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes* (St. Luke x.). *Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed?*

<sup>1</sup> The stone on which our Lord stood when speaking with Martha and Mary. See page 50.

Why so? Because your Father in Heaven knoweth that you have need of all these things. Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not of much more value than they? (St. Matt. v.).

B. Later on, at the Last Supper, He put this question to them: *When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything? They answered: Nothing* (St. Luke xxii.). Why not? Because the Christian apostolic poverty to which they were called, and which they are practising, is not a starvation poverty, but, in reality, a rich poverty. Needy, St. Paul writes, *yet enriching many: having nothing, yet possessing all things* (2 Cor. vi.). It is only a special covenant of trust in God, by which men bind themselves to give up house, and lands, and money, and lucrative trades, and professions, in order to devote themselves to God's work; and our Lord, on His part, undertakes to provide for them abundantly by an exceptional providence, a hundred-fold in this life, besides the eternal life to come. It is therefore merely a great act of trust in God; and our Father in Heaven is filled with infinite joy when His children will so trust Him. For He is accustomed to be much mistrusted. As our Blessed Lord was a Man acquainted with infirmity (Isaiah liii.), so is He also acquainted and most familiar with every form of mistrust. For Satan is always busy, and most successful, night and day, in whispering calumnies against our good God; and therefore, if we may express a great truth in our colloquial language, our Lord is most thankful for small mercies, and every little act of trust delights Him. What is almsgiving but an act of trust? Do we really give, when we have God's solemn promise that all is to come back again, *shaken together, pressed down, and flowing over?* (St. Luke vi.). Do we call it giving when we are to get all back with such interest? Surely not. Almsgiving is in truth only lending, at immense interest, and on most excellent security. Where then is the merit of almsgiving? It is an act of

trust in our Lord. Instead of lending our money to a banker or a broker, we lend a little to our Lord, Who is in sore need for His poor, and this small act of trust and mercy contents Him inflexibly. For He is lowly and needy, and accustomed to be "glutted with reproaches". He is surprised and comforted beyond all thought when any of His own children trust Him a little.

#### STATION II.

*And many of the Jews were come to Mary and Martha to comfort them concerning their brother* (v. 19.).

A. "Attentive." Stay a little in this house of mourning. Look at these most sorrowful sisters; watch their tears; hear their sobbing; no unholy word of murmuring escapes from them, for our Blessed Saviour is speaking inwardly words that sanctify their grief. *Blessed are they that mourn* in this way. Sorrow is sometimes unblest, unhallowed. It then becomes irreverent and wicked, and blasphemes—that is, it accuses and calumnies God's providence. This should not be. Sorrow and suffering are specially blessed and sanctified by the Sacred Passion of Jesus, and ought to help us powerfully to greater union with Him.

B. Again, we may learn from these Jews who, though their race was stiff-necked and hard-hearted, can yet feel for the bereaved, and give their time to the holy work of comforting and consoling. The dead *who die in the Lord* are blessed, as St. John writes (Apoc. xiv.), and their lot is not matter for pity. Neither would it be a kindness to call them back, if we might. But survivors are often much to be pitied, for they are crushed by the sudden blow, and their oppressive loneliness becomes sometimes a danger to their souls. To comfort them and sympathise with them is good almsgiving, a blessed work of mercy.

#### STATION III.

*Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him, but Mary sat at home* (v. 20.).  
Martha is believed to have been the elder sister, and

was therefore, perhaps, managing the house, and the news would be brought to her that Jesus was near. She may have been carried away with her desire to see our Lord at once, and so started without staying to tell Mary; or else, seeing how Mary was overcome with her grief, she may have thought it better not to disturb her, but to go and bring the Master to her.

If Mary had heard the news when Martha did, it is scarcely credible that she would have stayed at home.

#### STATION IV.

*Martha, therefore, said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee* (vv. 21, 22).

A. *If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* The father of the possessed child said to our Saviour: "I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief". And they who are washed from sin, still cry out: "*Amplius lava me*"—"Wash me yet more. Here in Martha's case we see faith and great trust and reliance: but not enough. She feels sure that if Jesus had been present, all would have gone well; but she does not yet realise that, though beyond Jordan, He saw Lazarus dying, and could have hindered death. Again, even now, she believes it is not too late; that her holy Master need only ask, and God will hear and grant all He asks; but she has not as yet taken in fully our Lord's teaching, *I and the Father are one* (St John x.).

B. Christian parents, remember Martha's word: *If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Impress this truth on your child in the dangerous time of youth. "If our Lord is with you, if by going to Mass and Holy Communion you keep Him with you, you will pass safe through these dangers; your soul will not die. His word to you will be: *Thou art Mine. I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee. When thou shalt walk in the fire thou shalt not be burnt, and the fire shall not burn in thee*" (Isaiah xliii.).

C. When things go wrong, we sometimes blame a servant, or we say: It was because we neglected some human precautions. But the real cause may be that Jesus was not here. We are taught by Holy Church to pray that "Every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended". Alas! the unfortunate bridegroom and bride are gone to be married sacrilegiously in the unhallowed temple of a false religion for which Christ has nothing but anathema. If Jesus is not with them on the nuptial-day, to bless and hallow married life and give abundant grace as His wedding present, married life will not be what He wished it to be, a safe and pleasant pathway to Heaven.

#### STATION V.

*Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again* (v. 23).

A. Happy the day, happy the hour when our Lord at last answers the father and mother praying long and earnestly for their lost prodigal: "Your child shall rise again". To us, it seems, during the long, cheerless winter of distress and anxiety, as if prayers were not heard; and too often the suppliant grows weary and faint-hearted. *Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God you may receive the promise* (Hebrews x.). Blessed is he who perseveres to the end. *He who perseveres to the end he shall be saved* (St. Matt. x. 22), and shall save others. St. Monica did not lose hope, but prayed and wept for seventeen years. Not one prayer was wasted. When the safe moment was come, our Lord poured out in a plentiful profusion all the graces that had been earned by these multiplied prayers and tears, *good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together and flowing over* (St. Luke vi. 3). Three different poets have described pathetically the shepherd wandering at night in the drifting snow, and at last losing heart and lying down to die within a few feet of his own cottage door. A little more perseverance would have saved him.

So, too, the importunate man got at last the loaf he wanted for his guest by knocking and knocking again with troublesome perseverance.

#### STATION VI.

*Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day. Jesus said to her: I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And every one that loveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? (vv. 24-26).*

A. Martha has only a far-off hope for the Last Day. And so we oftentimes have only a faint hope that things will come right in Heaven. But our Saviour does not wait for Heaven. He means His faithful friends to have also their hundred-fold here. He means this earth, where now He has fixed His abode in the tabernacle, to be no longer a cheerless valley of tears, but "*anla Dei et porta cæli*,"—the outer court of God and gate of Heaven (Genesis xxviii.).

B. *I am the Resurrection and the Life.* So our Lord speaks to us from the tabernacle. "Do not go elsewhere." *Come to Me, all you who labour.* Even if you are dead, *I am the Resurrection.* If your soul is sick to death, *I am the Life.* Do not stay away from Confession and Holy Communion because you are full of infirmities. *They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick (St. Luke v.).*

C. *He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.* Of all times, it is when we have lost the life of grace by deliberate sin, that we have the greatest need of a strong act of faith and hope. Satan knows well that he has gained little so long as hope lives in the soul. Therefore, as soon as ever he has induced a soul to sin, he immediately sets to work—most diligently to bring about a further sin—a much worse sin—against hope. For he knows that we dishonour our Father in Heaven

and the plentiful redemption of our Lord Jesus by the second sin against hope—much more than by the former sin of anger or sensuality. He knows that the soul that can say after sin: "My God and my Father, my sin is great, but Thy mercy is greater," has already gone a long way towards repairing the sin committed. Therefore, with all manner of lies and trickery Lucifer labours to persuade the sinner who has just fallen, that he cannot possibly pray as yet, that it would be a mockery and an insult, that he must wait some days. It is St. Augustine who says that as hope is like the fresh air that sustains life, a sin against hope has the effect of strangulation, so that the breath of life from Heaven cannot find entrance into the soul. As long as hope lives in the soul, forgiveness will certainly come, and the life of grace will be restored. *He that believeth in Me (and My promises), although he be dead, shall live.*

D. *Believest thou this?* In Baptism Holy Church asks the child, with regard to the articles of the creed, "Dost thou believe?" The sponsors answer: "I do believe." St. Ignatius recommends us from time to time to make a study of the Creed, by what is called his second method of prayer, considering attentively each article. If our good Angel could get a hearing, he would often question us: "Do you believe that God is your Father, and do you believe that He sees you? Do you believe that Christ Jesus died for you? Do you believe that He offers Himself for you in the Holy Mass?" and so of the rest.

E. *I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.*

When our Lord spoke this word so full of hope for us, He knew His own great secret. He knew that He was going to make a most abundant atonement for every kind of sin; that He was going to taste every kind of sorrow and trouble that could come to any of His followers in this world. He was going also in His Sacred Passion to present

Himself to men in so many attractive shapes that He had a right to say prophetically that even the dead soul shall live. *I will draw all to Myself.*

#### STATION VII.

*She saith to Him: I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Who art come into this world (v. 27).*

A. Some commentators think that when our Lord said to Martha, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, there went with His words an interior light into her soul that perfected her faith, and brought home to her that He was the Son of God, co-equal in all things with His Father. St. Chrysostom and others, however, think it doubtful whether she yet believed in His Divinity. Be this as it may, let us find leisure to say often with her, and with a full faith, as we turn our thoughts to the Holy Tabernacle: *Tu rex gloriæ, Christe*. I believe firmly that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who art come into the world to dwell among us.

#### STATION VIII.

*And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come, and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to Him. For Jesus was not as yet come into the town, but He was still in that place where Martha had met Him (vv. 28-30).*

Coming from the Jordan along the road from Jericho, our Saviour, when about half a mile from Bethany, would have the little town on the slope of Mount Olivet full before Him to the south-west. There He stood and sent for Martha. A singularly hard and smooth block of stone, resembling our granite and rising a little above the ground, is still pointed out as "the stone of conference". This is the stone on which our Saviour stood with His face towards Bethany, while He spoke with Martha, and afterwards with Mary.

The people of the country say that they have often tried to break pieces of stone from this block, in order to give them as relics to pilgrims, but that their efforts have been in vain.

There is great reason for giving credence to such traditions among the Arabs in Palestine, as they are known to cling to traditions with a pertinacity even more wonderful than what is observed in Ireland. A distinguished Irish Bishop, now dead, used to tell that when first consecrated, he found the people of the town in which he lived going every year to Communion on a certain day, which they called "abbey-day". They could give no further account of this devout practice than this, that it was "the abbey-day". Some time elapsed before the Bishop discovered that the fine ruins of an old abbey which stood about two miles from his house were the ruins of a Franciscan convent, destroyed with so many others by the man of ruin, Oliver Cromwell. For two centuries therefore and more, the people, without knowing why, had kept alive the tradition of the Portuncula on the 2nd of August. They had not forgotten the day on which they used to go to the "abbey". The Arabs in Palestine are still more retentive of ancient traditions; and it is by listening to the information which they give that the indelible Franciscan Fathers and Brothers have known where to make their excavations, and brought to light so many sacred shrines long buried underground.

#### A. She went and called her sister Mary.

Each word from the lips of her Divine Master is increasing faith and hope and charity in the soul of Martha, and, under an inspiration from His loving Heart, she wishes her sister to have her share in this hour of grace. Let us reflect on ourselves; we also ought ever to wish to share all blessings with our neighbours. Holy Job thought it a great crime to eat his morsel alone, and not make the fatherless eat thereof (xxxix). Old Tobias gave this as a parting counsel to his beloved son, *Eat thy bread with the hungry* (iv). So must we desire to share every grace with others. We are to say "Our Father," not, "My Father". "Give us this day," not, "Give me this day". How admirable in the life of Blessed Peter Faber, S.J., is his continual prayer that blessings may come to others, that their crops may be good; that they who gave the candles to the altar may be blessed, and they also who light them. There are pious travellers who say a *De profundis* for the Holy Souls whenever they pass through a railway tunnel. In some Catholic Colleges St. Francis Xavier's



custom is maintained of reminding the students to pray for the dead while they are undressing to go to bed.

When we thus pray for others, our prayer becomes a holy alms as well as a prayer. Therefore we will not eat our morsel alone. We will share.

B. *She went and called her sister Mary secretly*, that is, she went to her and whispered gently. For Christ's messengers speak quietly to those who love Him. St. Ignatius teaches us, that when a soul is pleasing to God, and in a good and fervent state, our Lord Himself and the Angels, His messengers, speak to such a soul gently; their word comes like water dropping into a sponge. The devil, on the contrary, tries in such souls to create disturbance and alarm: his words are water splashing on a rock. But if, on the contrary, the soul is in a bad state, going from one grievous sin to another, Satan then naturally speaks soft words and presents images of sensual pleasure; but the good Angel brings the thought of death and judgment, and tries to stop by fear the downward progress.

C. *The Master is come and calleth for thee*. Our last summons will be like to this. *At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go forth to meet Him* (St. Matt. xxv.). May God grant in His mercy that His Angel may be able to bring us the tidings gently; and that they may be welcome to our souls, and not a harrowing disturbance.

D. *She riseth quickly and cometh to Him*.

Who will give tears to my eyes that I may bewail the hours in which I went most slowly and grudgingly to our Lord Who called me, or went not at all, but turned my back on Him?

E. *The Master is come and calleth thee*.

The Master is come, and is dwelling among us in the tabernacle. *He calleth thee*. He says to thee, as to Simon who entertained Him, *I have something to say to thee* (St. Luke vii.). *In whatsoever day you shall hear His voice harden not your hearts* (Psalm xciv.), but with Magdalen go quickly to Him, and say devoutly with the child Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth* (1 Kings ii.).

## STATION IX.

*The Jews, therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the grave to weep there* (v. 31).

A. Here, then, again, we who are disciples of Christ may learn a lesson from these Jews, seeing how they devote themselves to Mary to comfort her in her sorrow. They are giving her an alms; and in return for their work of mercy, they are led to our Lord and are witnesses of this great miracle, and many of them were no doubt drawn by this spectacle to believe in Him.

B. On the other hand, though well meant, theirs may have been a mistaken kindness. A better friend has now come to comfort Magdalen, she does not now need them. Sometimes we are intruding unseasonably upon sorrow, intending to comfort and console, when the mourners would be better alone with God. Worldly friends often persist in suggesting novels, theatres, and other similar medicines which give no relief. Physicians, too, at such times, prescribe long rest in the morning, whereas in that hour our Blessed Saviour is near on the altar; and He alone can, during the Holy Mass and at Communion, speak a word that will reach the wound in the soul and heal it.

## STATION X.

*When Mary, therefore, was come where Jesus was, seeing Him, she fell down at His feet and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died* (v. 32).

A. She says the same words that Martha had said; they had, no doubt, said them more than once to each other. But Magdalen is kneeling down at the feet of Jesus when she speaks her loving words. Her wish is ever to be where she first found grace and forgiveness, and first began to love much. *Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her* (St. Luke x.). Blessed penitent,

holy Magdalen, obtain for us a grace that may draw us to the feet of our Lord, there to multiply acts of true contrition and loving sorrow, because we have offended our good God, our Father, our Master, and our loving Redeemer.

## STATION XI.

*Jesus, therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself (v. 33).*

A. *When He saw her weeping, and the Jews with her weeping.* How good it is to be with Magdalen; for her deep and holy sorrow is contagious. Sickness is contagious, so is vice; but goodness and grace are also contagious. In a thousand ways salvation is more easy when our days are spent with the good and holy who live by faith.

B. *Jesus groaned and troubled Himself.* Had He not entered into His Soul. *He groaned in spirit.* The Latin word, *infernuit*, gives the idea that He groaned or shuddered through sorrow or indignation. Perchance, as some think, He was calling to mind how Satan has brought sin and death into the world; and how cruelly he persecutes men; and how this present miracle will be changed by his malicious suggestions into a poison to aggravate the wickedness of the Pharisees and priests.<sup>1</sup>

C. *Jesus groaned and troubled Himself.* We sometimes think that our Lord, like a rich man, can give us any alms we wish for without cost to Himself. We forget that for every grace that comes to us He paid a large price. Each time a sin of ours has been forgiven, He first endured Himself the penalty before our pardon was obtained. *In His bruises we are healed* (Isaiah liii.). Of every

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Toletus suggests that our Lord was troubled because the death of Lazarus and all the sorrow it caused, was rendered necessary by the malice of the Pharisees, in order that this miracle might counteract their evil influence.

blessing that we now enjoy, it may most truly be said: It was bought for you at a large cost.

*Fac Coramans Jesu mei.* Loving Heart of my Jesus, give me grace to believe and realise this great truth. *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

## STATION XII.

*And He said: Where have you laid him? They said: Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews, therefore, said: Behold, now He loved him (vv. 34—36).*

A. *He said: Where have you laid him? With the Prophet we may answer: "Domine Deus, tu nosti"—O Lord God, Thou knowest* (Ezekiel xxxvii.). Why does our Blessed Saviour ask us so often to tell Him what He knows already? Why does He afterwards make Mary at His own tomb tell Him whom she is seeking? Why does He make Cleophas and his companion tell Him their troubles on the road to Emmaus? We have, I think, the answer in the words of the Eternal Wisdom: *My delights were to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii. 31). As a good mother takes pleasure in hearing her children telling in their own way things she knows already, but pretends not to know; so our Lord finds comfort and delight in having us to speak to Him. So much so, that He will not give us our daily bread unless we come to Him and ask for it. He never tires of being with us, and therefore would have us always conversing with Him. *He spoke a parable to them* (His disciples) *that we ought always to pray and not to faint* (St. Luke xviii.).

B. *And Jesus wept.* Spiritual writers tell us that He often wept, but was not ever seen to laugh. A true-hearted mother could scarcely laugh while her much-loved child lies under sentence of death. Night and day she is thinking how to rescue him. Holy Church presents our Lord to us giving this account of His own most loving Heart: *My Heart expected reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.). He woke every morning with a heavy load on His

Heart; and, moreover, fully expecting to meet with ingratitude and contempt from those He loved. What wonder if His tears flow often, and if He does not laugh, or even smile! Yet all the while He has within Him His own peace; that peace which the world cannot give, and which no man can take from Him.

To His faithful followers in like manner He foretells that sorrow is to be their portion here on earth: *You shall lament and weep, but the world will rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy* (St. John xvi.). The world gives its best wine first, but in the end a wine more bitter than gall and wormwood. Our Lord, on the contrary, gives first the bitter draught from His chalice; but endless sweetness afterwards throughout the long eternity. And He does not always wait for the next world to console. For even here in this valley of tears, they who are so blessed as to mourn can often say with St. Paul: *I superabound with joy in all my tribulations* (2 Cor. vii.). What wonder? for it is to the blessed mourners that He promises that priceless legacy: *Peace I leave you, My peace I give you.*

### STATION XIII.

*The Jews, therefore, said: Behold, how He loved him* (v. 36).

A. In Purgatory, if we die well, we shall make long meditations on this word, *Behold, how He loved.* There at last we shall have leisure. For we shall be no longer under the bewitching power of trifling (Wisdom iv.), which keeps us so occupied and so busy here. And ten thousand times a thousand proofs will pass before our minds, each of them saying, *See how He loved you.* It is not a few tears only that are the proof; but He created me, made Himself my Father and me His child; He became Man for me; He made me His brother and His bride; He died for me; He invented His Blessed Eucharist for me; He sent His Holy Spirit to me; He charged His Blessed Mother to be a Mother to me; and at last He asked: *What is there*

*that I ought to do more for My vineyard and have not done to it?* (Isaiah v.). *O cor amans Jesu mei.* O loving Heart of Jesus, open my eyes here; give me grace to begin to see here how much, how truly, how wonderfully Thou hast loved me.

### STATION XIV.

*But some of them said: Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die?* (v. 37).

A. This is a fair and reasonable question. Our Lord's answer, had He chosen to give one, would be: "Certainly, I could; but I had just and wise reasons for not hindering his death. It was expedient for you that I should not hinder it." *What I am doing thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter* (St. John xii.). We often are inclined to condemn the providence of our God. He could have prevented this misery; why did He not? So we argue. At the final judgment when He makes known all His reasons and the whole plan and design on which He has acted, the prophetic Psalmist tells us: *He shall be justified in all His words, and shall overcome* (and triumph) *when He is judged* (Psalm l.). Angels and men will join with His Blessed Mother, their Queen, in her hymn: *My soul magnifies the Lord* (St. Luke i.). *The Lord is just in all His ways, and holy in all His works* (Psalm cxlv.).

B. Moreover, we often say: God can do all things. Why does He not bring about what I want? We forget that He has given us free-will and made the earth over to men: *The earth He gave to the sons of men* (Psalm cxiii.). As a father makes over a property to an eldest son and then does not interfere unduly, so God has made over this world to us, and has truly bound Himself not to interfere beyond a certain point with our supremacy here. He lets our will rule, but at the same time watches, and so overrules all our doings, that even our sins shall further His holy designs.

## SCENE IV.

BETHANY.

## THE TOMB.

## STATION I.

*Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it (v. 38).*

The sepulchres of the Jews were not all of the same form. As part of Judea was a very rocky country, caves or grottoes abounded. These were utilised, sometimes as chambers or out-houses attached to a dwelling-place, often too as graves for the dead. The doorway, or entrance, was sometimes in the side of the rock. In this case a large stone door stood in a prepared groove, and could be closed or rolled back as required. In other cases the cave or grotto lay underground, and the entrance to the grave was from above. Consequently, the stone, or slab, that covered the entrance was "laid over it," as is here said of the tomb of Lazarus.

This tomb, which is still shown, stands about forty yards higher up Mount Olivet than the house of Lazarus. At present you enter through a door into a chamber, or grotto, and there over these steps leading down to the grave. It must have been of so many other holy places, the Turks have desecrated the sacred spot by erecting a mosque. From the stone on the level where our Saviour conversed with Martha and Mary to the grave on the hill-side, the distance was nearly half a mile.

A. *Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself.*

Why is the Heart of our Blessed Lord again troubled? He is groaning, "*fremens*," that is, with a shudder or convulsion of horror. Has He not cause enough? He sees all things, and hears the never-ending wail of those who have been duped by Satan: *We fools. The serpent deceived me.* Death and the grave are only feeble representations of the eternal death and of that prison-house out of which there is no resurrection.

B. What wonder that the most compassionate Heart of Jesus pours out mercy in a torrent on all who help Him to save a poor sinner from the grasp of Satan? Forget

not the golden message delivered by St. James: *My brethren, if any of you err from the truth and one convert him; he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted, from the error of his ways, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins (c. v.).*

*Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart (1 Cor. ii.)* of any man on earth to conceive how sheer gladness and joy will overwhelm the soul at the judgment-seat, when the grateful Heart of our Lord speaks that word: *So long as you did it to the least of My little ones, you did it unto Me (St. Matt. xxv.).*

## STATION II.

*Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus said to her: Did I not say to thee, that if thou believe thou shalt see the glory of God? (vv. 39, 40).*

A. *Take away the stone.* When our Lord wishes to give us a great grace, as a rule He requires us to do some little thing as a preparation. At Cana: *Fill the water-pots with water.* This was an easy effort. To the young man: *Go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor.* This seemed hard; but, compared with the eternal reward, how small! But, easy or hard, our Blessed Lady's advice is ever the same as at Cana, *Whatever He shall say to you, do ye.* If you have to offer with her two pigeons, do it. If you have to offer a lamb, do it. Whatever the price, pay it, in order to secure to yourself the Child Jesus.

Our Lord goes further. He says to us: *If thy right hand scandalise thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Why? Because it is better for thee to go into Heaven maimed, than having two hands to be cast into everlasting fire (St. Matt. xviii.).*

B. But, alas! when our Blessed Lord thus asks us to give some little that He may have a plea for giving us much, our habit is to demur. *They began all at once to make*

*excuses* (St. Luke xiv.). Naaman, to be cleansed of his terrible leprosy, was only bidden to wash in the Jordan; but he did not see why he should. *Are not the waters of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?* (4 Kings v.). So now against confession, which renders the forgiveness of sin so unspeakably easy, the tempter at once suggests: Why confess to a man? Why not go direct to God? The answer is: God is the Master. He can choose His own method of dispensing grace. He chose to say to men, His ministers: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven*. Happy they who become like little children and follow our Lady's good advice: *Whatever He shall say to you, do it* (St. John iii.).

C. *Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days.*

Martha's faith seems to have been, as St. Chrysostom thought, still somewhat imperfect. Her sisterly heart shrunk from a painful exposure of her dear brother's decomposed corpse.

Did she make her expostulation out loud? or would she draw near to her good Master and whisper it to Him? However this be, our Blessed Saviour is not angry. He reassures her:

D. *Did I not tell thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?*

If the resurrection of one dead body is the glory of God, what a glory, what an admirable and stupendous outcome of the Sacred Passion and the plentiful redemption of Christ Jesus is the daily and hourly resurrection of so many sinful souls from eternal death to everlasting life!

E. *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days.* "*O vos omnes attendite*"—O all you who pass by the way, stay a little while to listen to these words, and then reflect on yourselves, and apply them to your case.

A mortal sin is like a mortal wound. When the mortal wound is inflicted, death with all its horrors does not

always set in at once. 'The whole effect of mortal sin does not appear till eternal death is come in the next world. There *malice* against God begins in good earnest. This *malice* in the soul is the corresponding effect to *rottenness* and *corruption* in the body. *Malice* is the *rottenness* of the dead soul, from which all life, all health, all beauty, all hope, all joy, all love is gone for ever. Mortal sin has never done its full work till despair sets in. As long as hope survives, the mortal wound has not taken full effect. The devil is therefore tormented with an intolerable restlessness till he can induce the poor sinner, after a mortal sin, to fling away all hope.

It is on record that a hermit, who had served God well for many years, in an evil hour yielded to the tempter and sinned grievously. But because of his long fidelity, the Lord had mercy on him, and taught him how to foil and baffle the murderous efforts made by Satan to complete his ruin, now that the first victory had been won. 'The father of lies, as usual, whispered that all was lost; that he must of necessity fling aside the monastic habit and return to the world; that it would be a mockery for him, and unbearable presumption, to persevere in monastic observances. The hermit's Angel Guardian would not allow him to listen for a moment to these lies; and urged strongly that this sad fall could only be a passing madness; that he must at once say, "My God, my Redeemer, in *te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in eternum*". Satan had to fly away, in the rage of disappointment and chagrin, according to that word of the Holy Ghost: *Revisit the devil and he will fly from you* (St. James iv.). Hope in Jesus Christ's redemption snatched the sinful soul out of the jaws of the destroyer; and true contrition undid entirely the ruin which the tempter had accomplished.

If, then, the poor frail soul falls into sin at noon, by far the wisest course is to repair that sin by an act of hope in God's mercy one minute after noon. It is not the voice of God, nor of any messenger from Heaven

that whispers so assiduously: "You cannot possibly pray to-day, nor confess to-day". Make haste, *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.). Make haste, *According to thy ability be merciful* (Tobias iv.), and thou shalt have mercy. Be quick, ask for pardon, and you shall receive. Be quick, confess your sin, and our Lord in Heaven will ratify the word spoken by His delegate on earth. "I absolve thee. Go in peace."

It is Satan, a liar from the beginning and a murderer, who well knows that it is when sin is four days old, and four months old, that the rottenness of death is more and more doing its work. So, poor sinner, *if to-day you shall hear the voice of God* (Psalm xciv.) praying you to come back and be forgiven, harden not your heart. Do not begin all at once to make excuses. Do not put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

### STATION III.

*They took, therefore, the stone away, and Jesus lifting up His eyes said: Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people that stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me* (vv. 41, 42).

A. *Because of the people that stand about have I said it. "Attendie."* Listen attentively, for in every word that cometh from the mouth of our Lord there is bread for our souls.

He is always Jesus. He is always saving; whether He speaks or is silent, when He eats, drinks, or sleeps. He is always thinking how to save *the people that stand about*, and the generations to come. For in reality we are all standing about, and as present to Him as were the Jews and Galileans around the grave. For our sakes He utilises the moments while they are drawing back the slab, to utter words that will nourish our poor souls.

"Attendie," reflect upon yourselves, *Go thou, and do likewise*. For we too live in presence of many standing about. We cannot go to Hell or to Heaven alone. Like men in penal servitude, we have to work out our salvation in gangs, made fast to one another, and we necessarily help each other to good or to evil. *I am partner, O Lord*, the Psalmist says, *with all who fear Thee* (Psalm cxviii.). O my God, deliver me from being partner with those who fear Thee not. From the sins of others, *spare Thy servant* (Psalm xviii.).

B. *Father, I give Thee thanks*. This word also our Saviour speaks for the sake of us who stand about Him. Alas! how often and how often has His Sacred Heart been constrained to stop the stream of grace because we would not say that word so dear to Him! My God, my Lord, *I give Thee thanks*.

C. *Because of the people—that they may believe*.

Now He lets out His secret, why—doing violence to Himself—He tarried so long beyond Jordan, and then climbed so slowly the steep hills from Jericho to Bethany; and all that while left Mary and Martha and Lazarus in the house of mourning. Now is He justified in all His words and works, for this day salvation will come to many.

D. *I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people that stand about, I said it* (St. John xi. 42).

Our Lord is a Mediator, a go-between. Observe His double work: first with His Father; then with the people. With His Father His task is easy. His Eternal Father is so well pleased in His Divine Son that He hears Him always, every wish of His Heart. But to win men and to persuade them He has to labour and suffer unspeakably.

E. *They took, therefore, the stone away*.

While Martha is troubled, contemplate her sister Magdalen. She has sunk down, once more, at the sacred feet of her Master. Her heart is loving Him much as she looks up into His face, *beautiful above the sons of men* (Psalm xlv.), listening to every word that He utters. A great

tranquillity has succeeded in her heart to the storm of her grief; and she is able to say in her secret soul to her Divine Master, "*Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me*". Most wonderfully, Lord, and in a way truly miraculous and admirable, *Thou hast established me in hope* (Psalm iv.). As they begin to draw away the heavy slab, her eye and her heart turn at one moment to the grave and are then riveted again on the beauty of her Divine Master. For now His features are lighted up with a faint ray of that hidden glory which by rights is always His, but is suppressed. Her heart is burning within her while He speaks. *They took, therefore, the stone away.*

The stone is rolled back; and suddenly there is a breathless stillness around the open grave, and the eyes of all are fixed on the majesty of our Lord's countenance.

#### STATION IV.

*When He had said these things He cried out with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound hands and feet with winding bands, and his face bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go* (vv. 43, 44).

A. They turned pale, those motionless men and women around the grave, as they listened awe-stricken to that command given to the dead, for *never man spoke* as Jesus then spoke. For an instant there is suspense and strain, and then the dead man in his grave-clothes is seen mounting the steps from the open cave and coming out into the midst of them, bound up in his swathing bands.

Loose him and let him go, the Lord says gently. At the word Martha springs forward, her heart throbbing, her tears falling fast. It is her work. Her trembling hands can untie every knot and loosen every band. No one else intrudes. For Mary can stir no hand. She is kneeling speechless and motionless by the side of her Master, washing once more abundantly with tears from her heart the beautiful feet that have brought the glad

tidings of peace. For an instant, as Martha lifts the *sudarium* from the head of that dear brother now come back from death, Mary looks up to see the disfigurement and discolourment of the grave roll away, like a shadow, across his living features. And lo! he is there in the beauty of his revived manhood, a very image, a God-made image of his own Creator and Redeemer in Whose presence he stands.

*The stars, the Prophet writes, the stars have given light in their watches and rejoiced. They were called, and they said: Here we are: and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them. This is our God, and there shall no other be accounted of in comparison of Him* (Baruch iii.). So is it now. Lazarus is called from out of the depths, and out of the depths he answers his Redeemer, "Here I am," and he comes forth from the grave, and with cheerfulness ineffable raises his eyes that they may shine forth to Him that made them and has now given back to them their sight.

Very soon, now that he is unbound, he is with Martha at the side of Mary and at the feet of Jesus, and their secret hearts are all saying: *This is our God, there shall no other be accounted of in comparison of Him. O good Lord Jesus, in this hour there is more than one come back to give Thee thanks. There are none to go away thankless.*

B. Did you mark—the disciples' loud, clear voice? How other afterwards—the Master's loud, clear voice? How it sounded like music from Heaven! It was, as the Psalm says, *the voice of the Lord in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence* (Psalm xxviii.). The tongues of men, the tongues of angels, could not, I think, reproduce the tones of that voice.

C. Did our Blessed Lady hear that loud cry? She was often with her Divine Son during His Public Life; and as the End is now drawing near, may we not safely assume that she is there on the hill-side, her heart also crying out: *Lazarus, come forth?* "O men, living or dead,

*whatever my Son shall say to you, do ye."* Can it be that Holy Mary is not there helping them in this hour to say fittingly and becomingly a canticle like her own: *My soul magnifies the Lord; my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour?*

D. The blessed angels also are listening in an ecstasy of contentment. For well they know that this is only the beginning of what the voice of God made Man is to do on earth.

E. And the loud clear voice is heard too by the princes of darkness, and scatters these proud spirits in the conceit of their heart (St. Luke i.).

F. But why does our Saviour cry out with so loud a voice? Would not a whisper from Him have reached Lazarus and awakened him from the sleep of death? When the End shall come, will not the voice of the Archangel and the sound of his trumpet bring up all the dead, great and small, into the presence of the throne? *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise* (1 Cor. xv.). As before, so now also, our Lord is thinking of us, *the people who stand by*.

When, two years ago, He healed the palsied man in Capernaum, it was that all might see that *the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins*. Now, too, He knows well that this resurrection is only a picture, an image of that resurrection of the dead souls of sinners which is soon to be effected from the rising of the sun to its setting, and from sundown to the dawn. And well too He knows how much the resurrection of the sinner will cost Him; that He will have to put forth the might of His arm to undo and conquer and cancel the fatal work of sin; that the word of power which His minister is to utter in His Name will in very truth be *the voice of the Lord in power, the voice of the Lord in magnificence*. He wishes to impress on us that a loud cry indeed is needed to awaken the sinner from his sleep of death.

G. The multitudes that saw the palsied man rise and walk, *glorified God that gave such power to men*. As we listen

to the loud cry of Jesus, *Lazarus, come forth*, shall we not make hearty acts of thanksgiving for the heavenly power given to poor men to say, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I absolve thee. Go in peace." What wonder that zealous confessors exhort their penitents to say from their hearts after confession the beautiful psalm, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, Who forgiveth all thy iniquities* (Psalm cii.).

H. Mark, too, how Lazarus comes out of the tomb with his grave-clothes still on him, and the swathing bands still binding him.

"*Attendite.*" *O all ye who pass by, stay a little while to look at this picture*. For it is even so oftentimes that we come out from the Sacred Tribunal of Penance. By a valid absolution we are raised to life assuredly. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath* (our Redeemer) removed our grievous iniquity from us. But the grave-clothes of past habits may be still around us; and the bands of many usual venial sins may still be depriving us of the full liberty of the children of God, so that we come out of the confessional, at times, faint and feeble, and the spark of heavenly life within us needs most careful nursing, lest it be put out.

The Jews, when they embalmed their dead, did it less thoroughly than the Egyptians. So that commonly in their hot climate, after a short time decomposition began within the grave, and the corpse became an image of the sinner's dead soul, all life and beauty gone, and hideous corruption set in. Hence the sensitive terror of Martha when the grave of her beloved brother was to be opened. Hence too, perhaps, the fear of the devout women on Calvary that enough had not been done by Nicodemus and Joseph for the embalming of the body of their Lord.

I. Observe, before retiring from the grave, the calm, tranquil fortitude of our Saviour, Who knows full well that in this hour, by this public manifestation of His power, He is signing His own death-warrant. In earlier days, when He worked wonders, He sometimes sought



concealment. *Tell the vision to no man* (St. Matt. xvii.). *See thou tell no man what was done* (St. Luke viii.). But there is a time for concealment and a time for publicity. The hour of the great death-struggle is come. The time for secrecy is gone by. There is around the grave to-day a large gathering from Galilee and Judea ripe for grace.

J. *Loose him, and let him go.* In a special manner this Divine commission is given to priests. But, thanks to the great charity of our Lord, every one is allowed to share in the Divine work of loosing the poor sinner and enabling him to walk well up the mountain of God. To all of us, without exception, our Saviour says by His Prophet: *Loose the bands of wickedness; undo the bundles that oppress; let them that are broken go free; and break asunder every burden. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am* (Isaiah lviii.).

Reflect upon yourself: Am I using my working-day diligently? Am I helping Catholics and Protestants to rise from the grave, and to get rid of their grave-clothes?

My time is short. Have I reason to fear that at my death my Saviour may be obliged to say to me, in sorrow unspeakable: *The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed: that which is broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought back; neither have you sought that which was lost?* (Ezechiel xxxiv.).

#### STATION V.

*Many, therefore, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him* (v. 45).

A. How good a thing it is to be the friend, or kinsman, of the holy who are friends of Jesus Christ!

Mark how many are brought to Jesus through these two sisters and their holy brother. What an unspeakable joy it is to Mary and Martha and Lazarus to see so many of their friends and companions beginning to believe in their Divine Master!

Do those act wisely who by mixed marriages and by courting companionship with the worldly, become partners with them, and throw in their lot with those who are not at all dear to our Lord?

B. As they go home from the grave, how different all is from that hour when they came to bury Lazarus: *Going they went and wept. But coming they shall come with joyfulness. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted* (St. Matt. v.). How joyful the hour when Jesus calls from grief and desolation to peace and gladness! Still more when He calls the Holy Soul from the prison of Purgatory to his home in Heaven. But most of all when with a loud voice He calls the sinful soul out of death to heavenly life. Then there is great joy in Heaven.

#### SCENE III.

#### THE HOUSE OF CAIPHAS AND THE ROAD TO IT.

*But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done* (St. John xi. 46).

The house of Caiphas, Joseph Caiphas as he is called by the historian Josephus, stood at the south-west corner of Jerusalem, within the walls, and very near the Coenaculum, or Supper-Chamber, where our Blessed Saviour celebrated the Last Supper. The house probably formed one wing of the Palace of the Priests; and was connected by long galleries and halls with the other wing, in which stood the house of Annas.

The High Priest in Jerusalem formerly held his office for life; but the Romans, though they respected Jewish laws and customs to a certain extent, yet, when it suited their convenience, treated the Jews and their religion with contempt. They had made their despotic power felt by frequently deposing the High Priests, and substituting others in place of the deposed. Annas was the last of those who had held office legitimately. The Romans had deposed him; but he was still looked upon by many as the High Priest *de jure*. He was considered to be one well versed in the Law; and he was the prime mover in all the machinations against our Lord. His son-in-law, Joseph Caiphas, had been raised by the Romans to the office of High Priest, and was entirely under the influence of Annas.

## STATION I.

*Some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done (v. 46).*

A. Note how the prophecy of Holy Simeon has its fulfilment: *This child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many* (St. Luke ii.). By the raising of Lazarus many are converted and drawn to Christ; but there are men, on the contrary, who take occasion by this miracle of mercy to work mischief and ruin. Alas! what was true then of our Lord, is equally true of Him now in His Eucharistic state. *Mors est malis; vita bonis.* To those who have grace, He is life; to those whose souls are poisoned by sin, the Bread of Life is death.

B. Mark the haste of these evil-minded men, as they hurry to the top of Mount Olivet and down to Gethsemani, and then, by what was afterwards called the road of captivity, along the south side of the city to the palace of Caiphas. *Their throat is an open sepulchre* (Psalm xlii.). For as an open grave gives out infection, so does the mouth of tale-bearers spread iniquity. *The poison of asps is under their lips.* Such whisperers speak fair at times, and seem to be righteous; but the poison of asps is hidden under their plausible words. *Their feet are swift to shed blood.* In hot haste they are speeding to inflame the mad passions of the Rulers already thirsting for the Blood of Jesus. What wonder, then, that the Holy Spirit tells us that *the whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace.* *The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many* (Ecclesi. xv.).

C. Observe that it is the tongue of the *third person* that disquiets you. If an enemy speaks ill of you behind your back, he undoubtedly wrongs you; but it is the tongue of the *third person*, who comes to report to you what your enemy has said, that really harms you; for he causes you to sin and to hate. Hence the Psalmist, after asking the question: *Lord, who shall rest in Thy holy hill?* that is, who

shall spend his eternity with Thee in Heaven? sets down this requisite among others: It is the man *who hath not taken up a reproach against his neighbour; in his sight the malignant is brought to nothing* (Psalm xiv.). That is to say, the man who will not listen to detractors and tale-bearers, so that the malignant whisperer, who comes to befool the absent, finds himself not at all welcome, but strongly rebuked and *brought to nothing.*

Especially necessary is this unwillingness to listen to tale-bearing for all those who hold authority and wish to save their souls. The officious young Amalecite who came to David with the great news that his enemy, Saul, would trouble him no more, never returned again with such a message. (See 2 Kings i.) Neither will the slanderer come back if properly rebuked.

D. There is another milder way in which we at times imitate these tale-bearers. Some, without perceiving it, become gradually nothing but news-carriers. If a tragical death occurs, or an appalling accident, or, worse still, a frightful scandal, their impulse is at once to spread the news; to go in haste from door to door to tell the sad tidings. They only stay long enough to say with a sigh: "Very sad, is it not?" and then speed on to be the first at some other door.

But surely if there has been a death, the dead want prayers. If there has been a great sin, the poor sinner wants some one to win grace for him. Why not stay at home and do this holy work?

E. Jesus, Who when beyond Jordan saw Lazarus dying in Bethania, now sees these messengers on their way, and knows perfectly how they will rouse the jealous malice of the Rulers. He hears every word that they utter. With an act of His will, He could render them motionless, or dumb. But He has given to man a free-will, and for wise reasons does not repent, nor take that free-will away. His Heart is ready to endure what man's free-will designs against Him.

F. Contrast for a while the excited, feverish enemies of Christ with Lazarus just come back to life. Observe how he fixes his eyes on the Author of his life, and how he loves the Giver much more than the gift; and how tranquil and how gentle he is, and how little excited now by the things of this poor world to which he is called back. When our souls are raised from death to life, and, with the Prodigal, are welcomed home and clothed once more with the white robe, and fed with the Sacred Body of our Lord, shall all this wonderful and most unexpected forgiveness have no subduing effect on us? Shall it produce no heavenly meekness and tranquillity within us? Shall we at once relapse into giddy frivolity or impatience?

## SCENE IV.

## THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL.

## STATION I.

*The Chief Priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a Council, and said: What do we? For this Man doth many miracles. If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come, and will take away our place and nation. But one of them, named Caiphas, being the High Priest of that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient that one Man should die for the people; and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself, but, being the High Priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for the nation, but to gather together into one the children of God that were dispersed (St. John xi. 47, seq.).*

On the south-east of Jerusalem there is a hill still called the Hill, or Mount, of Evil Counsel. Tradition says that the country villa of the Priests stood there, and that it was in this villa that the Priests and Rulers met to meditate vain things, and plot against the Lord and against His Christ (St. John xi.).

A. Take your place in spirit in this Council-Chamber.

Look at the troubled features of these malignant men. Each of them might well say to his soul, "*Quare conturbas me?*"—*Wherefore dost thou trouble me?* Aman, the great Chanceller, could not enjoy at all the vast blessings heaped on him, because one man, Mardochai, would not uncover his head to him. But the grievance of these dupes of the father of lies is not even as real as Aman's was. Jesus had never refused them any courtesy. Their one complaint is, that *this Man doth many miracles*. "O hypocrites," our Lord says to them, "*is your eye evil because I am good?*"

Have we not much reason to say humbly again and again, "From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, O Lord"?

B. Observe too here, and throughout the Sacred Passion, how our Lord, as He can draw praises from the lips of infants (Psalm viii.), so too can also bring about that His enemies shall, when He wishes it, proclaim this truth, *What do we? For this Man doth many miracles*. They cannot then plead ignorance. Hence our Saviour, a little while later, said of them: *If I had not done among them the works that no other Man had done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father (St. John xv.).*

O Lord, chastise me not in Thy wrath (Psalm vi.); say not to Thy avenging Angel: *Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes (Isaiah vi.).*

Notice the phrase, "blind the heart". Blindness of intellect may sometimes be excusable ignorance; but blindness of heart is wilful and malicious blindness.

C. *If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come.* These Councillors were aware that the time of the Messias was near, and that many of the people were persuaded that the Messias would deliver them from the Roman yoke. They pretend, therefore, to fear that if the people believe in Jesus, there will be a rising against the Romans, of which they have already had some specimens;

and the Romans will crush the rising with merciless vengeance, and entirely sweep away their nation. This plausible fable the father of lies has ready for them, and they accept his teaching. The result is that, because they will not receive Jesus, but hunt Him to death, the Romans will come and take away entirely their place and their nation.

*From them that resist Thy right hand, keep me, O Lord, as the apple of Thy eye* (Psalm xvi.).

*D. One of them named Caiphas, being the High Priest of the year.*

Caiphas was *de facto* the High Priest, thrust in by Roman power. Annas, as has been said, had been the legitimate High Priest, but had been deposed by the Romans; and there had been a quick succession of intruded High Priests, appointed by the Roman Governors. Though Annas, then, may have a better title to the High Priest's office, still Caiphas holds the position, and because he is High Priest, he prophesies; and, what is more wonderful, prophesies without understanding the import of his own words.

Mark well this difference between the private life of Caiphas and his official capacity. *The Scribes and Pharisees*, our Lord said soon after, *have sithen on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say and do not* (St. Matt. xxiii.). Catholics should carefully explain to Protestant friends that when we say that the Successor of St. Peter in his Apostolic office is infallible, we mean only that his official teaching is watched and guided by the Holy Ghost, and is therefore unerring. In his private life he must work out his salvation *in fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.) like other men.

Give us grace, dear Lord, to help many to obedience to the infallible teaching of Thy Apostolic Vicar.

*E. It is expedient that one Man should die for the people.* Yes, this is most true; and no one is so eager to die for

the people as our Lord Jesus Himself; and not only for this nation—for Christ died for all (2 Cor. v.), and for each of us; so that each can say truly, *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii. 20). *He wishes all men to be saved* (1 Timothy ii.). And all will be saved by His plentiful redemption, and gathered together in one, as children of God, except those who deliberately and perseveringly reject Him, and join in the cry, *Away with Him.*

While these Priests and Rulers are met together against the Lord and against His Christ (Psalm ii.), His most compassionate Heart is saying to their hard hearts, *My people, what have I done to Thee, and in what have I molested thee?* (Micah vi.).

#### STARRON II.

*From that day, therefore, they devised to put Him to death* (v. 53).

Here we see that there was reason to say in the Introduction to this work that the raising of Lazarus is "the beginning of the end". Jesus is now doomed. Some writers think that what was called the Greater Excommunication was at this meeting pronounced against Him; but others consider it more probable that this Greater Excommunication was not pronounced against Him till the day before the Crucifixion, and that till then He was only subject to the Lesser Excommunication, which forbade Him to teach in the Temple, or Synagogue. These writers think that in obedience to the sentence of Lesser Excommunication Jesus taught in His latter days only in the portico of the Temple. But this seems more than doubtful. The Gospels speak not only of His teaching in the Temple, but exercising full authority there as the Lord of the Temple.

The Greater Excommunication was pronounced very solemnly at the gate of the Temple, and at the door of every synagogue.

All through our Lord's life, and especially during His Sacred Passion, we may notice how He combines charitable prudence and meekness with the utmost fortitude and fearlessness. *The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish* (St. Matt. xii.). No harsh word from Him will ever break the frail reed already bruised; nor will He ever, through impatience, get rid of the oppressive odour by quenching the smoking flax. But when His Father's honour, or the salvation of His little ones requires it, He braves all the rage of His enemies.

We find Him, therefore, sometimes hiding Himself in order to remove the occasion of more sin, and sometimes showing

Himself most publicly in presence of all His persecutors. Meekness and humility of heart at times seem like weakness, but in reality they are the greatest strength, and are sure to conquer. *The meek shall possess the land* (St. Matt. v.).

## SCENE V.

## EPHREM, A TOWN SIXTEEN MILES NORTH OF

## JERUSALEM.

## STATION I.

*Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but He went into the desert into a city that is called Ephrem. There He abode with His disciples* (St. John xi. 54).

Our Lord, when tarrying beyond Jordan, was with His all-seeing eye watching Lazarus as he died in his chamber in Bethany. And now, after the great miracle, as He goes from the grave to the house of Lazarus, He sees and hears Annas and Caiphas and their accomplices *mediating vain things against the Lord and against His Christ*. As, therefore, His hour is not yet come, in order to prevent sin He leaves Bethany at once, probably on the day of the miracle, and retires to Ephrem, a town about sixteen miles to the north of Jerusalem, on the borders of the wilderness, or desert. In the mountainous districts of Judea, wild and lonely places called the wilderness, were common. As He foreknew that His enemies would also be full of malice against Lazarus, it seems probable that He counselled him and Mary and Martha to come with Him to Ephrem. The providence of God easily arranged that His journey should escape notice, and thus once more He baffles the counsels of the Rulers; for we find soon after the Priests and Ancients issuing an order that *if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him* (St. John xi.). But till He Himself chooses, no one can prevail against Him. So too are His servants always safe under His protection (Psalm xc.). It is in memory of this retirement of our Saviour that the images and crucifixes are veiled in our churches during Passiontide.

A. Observe how our Lord, though He has all power, yet uses the ordinary precautions dictated by prudence. St. Ignatius of Loyola, we are told, used to say, "Pray as earnestly as if Heaven was to do all: but work as diligently as if no help could come from Heaven."

B. There is a *time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.). Our Lord, in His wisdom, knows when to

hide Himself, and when to appear. Sometimes in our souls He reveals Himself, and all is sunshine. Sometimes He hides His face, and all is like dark winter. Are we to forsake Him in these dark hours? *Lord, to whom shall we go?*—(St. John vi.) St. Peter wisely said. If we abandon Thee, what other friend have we to whom we can flee? *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

But has He not, some one says, abandoned me? No, He hides Himself, but is still with us; and more watchful over us now than during the sunshine. "Where wert thou, O Lord?" St. Antony cried out in anguish, when our Saviour appeared to him after a night of great desolation and temptation. "I was in the very centre of thy heart, Antony," our Blessed Saviour answered, "otherwise thou wouldst not have fought so well." *I am with him in tribulation* (Psalm xc.), is His promise to the afflicted soul. Therefore we must adhere to the counsel of the Holy Spirit, *Make not haste in the time of clouds* (Eccles. ii.). God gives the sunshine; God gives the cloud. *If we have received good things from the hands of God, why not the evil?* (Job ii.).

This would be, perhaps, the place to discuss at length the question, how long our Lord abode at Ephrem; but a few words may suffice. In the beginning of chapter i. it was stated that some have adopted the theory of a modern English commentator, who has drawn out a very elaborate argument to prove that our Blessed Saviour raised Lazarus to life at the end of our January, and then from Ephrem went north through Samaria to Galilee, and after visiting all the places where He had preached, or where His disciples had preached, returned south along the east bank of the Jordan, and crossed that river in the neighbourhood of Jericho, early in Passion Week.

Even if this theory were true, it would be quite out of keeping with the scope of this work to follow our Blessed Saviour through those two months of His progress.

The other view is more convenient for our purpose; and also, very probably, the more correct one. It will be enough to offer one or two reasons for this opinion.

In the first place, it seems to fit in better with the narrative of St. John.

St. John, as is known, wrote his Gospel many years after the

other Evangelists had written. He had their narratives before him, and one of his objects was to supply some omissions, and to render some difficult passages more clear. As a rule he carefully abstains from repeating what the others had narrated, and so does not even record so important an event as the institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

If, then, one of his objects was to put facts in order and make the narrative and the chronology more clear, the theory which harmonises better with his narrative is probably the true one. Now it will perhaps be readily admitted that his story agrees better with the common opinion that our Saviour raised Lazarus to life shortly before Mid-Lent Sunday, and retired at once to Ephrem; abode there eight or ten days; and then, on Passion Sunday, or thereabouts, proceeded from Ephrem to Jericho, and from Jericho, by slow stages, to Bethany, arriving there about Friday in Passion Week.

This seems to be the view which would suggest itself to one who was guiding himself simply by St. John's narrative. His text is as follows:

*Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but He went into a country near the desert, into a city that is called Ephrem, and there He abode with His disciples. And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand; and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Pasch, to purify themselves. They sought, therefore, for Jesus; and they discounte one with another, standing in the Temple: What think you, that He is not come to the festival-day? And the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him.*

This narrative seems to hang together very well, if we suppose, according to the more general opinion, that the events here recorded all took place in about a fortnight.

According to the other view, about two months are supposed to elapse between the words, *there abode with His disciples*, and the words immediately following, *And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand*. We do, no doubt, in the Gospels find intervals of time passed over in this way; but unless clear proof is brought that there was such a lapse of time between the two sentences, that may be allowed to read according to what appears on the surface, and consider the account of St. John as a consecutive story. Besides this argument drawn from St. John's narrative in favour of the common view, there is also the other to which allusion was made in the first chapter, that those who hold the opposite opinion are obliged to say, that when St. Luke tells us in chapter ix. that *Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*, He was all the while going away from Jerusalem to the north. This seems a *hard saying*.

We may assume, then, that our Blessed Saviour, after raising Lazarus, went to Ephrem and abode there till the beginning of Passion Week, and then set out on His last journey to Jerusalem, through Jericho.

## CHAPTER III.

### PASSION WEEK.

#### SCENE I.

#### ROAD FROM EPHREM TO JERICO.

*They were on the way going up to Jerusalem. And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid (St. Mark x. 32).*

According to the chronology which we are following, this sentence records what happened on Passion Sunday or thereabouts.

Since the raising of Lazarus, our Blessed Saviour has been in retirement at Ephrem, and now has begun His last journey to Jerusalem. He is not going thither by the straightest and shortest road, but is going southward near the banks of the Jordan, towards Jericho.

There are words in St. Matthew's Gospel, and also in St. Mark's, which might lead us to suppose that our Saviour on leaving Ephrem crossed the Jordan, and walked southward down the eastern bank, and recrossed the river into Judea somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jericho.

The words in St. Mark's Gospel are: *Rising up from thence, He cometh into the coasts of Judea beyond the Jordan* (St. Mark x. 1). St. Matthew's words are like to these: and, at first sight, they seem to refer to this present journey.

We need not stop here to discuss the meaning of the words, *the coasts of Judea beyond the Jordan*, about which opinions are divided. For our purpose it is sufficient to note that in this passage St. Mark and St. Matthew are not speaking of the journey which we are considering, but of an earlier journey in the month of August or September, when, after the Transfiguration, our Lord left Galilee and went to Jerusalem. This is clear from St. Matthew: *It came to pass when Jesus had ended these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*. On that occasion He started from Galilee. Now He is, according to our supposition, on the road from Ephrem to Jericho.

## STATION I.

*And they were on the way going up to Jerusalem. And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid (St. Mark x. 32).*

A. *And Jesus went before them.*

"Attendie." Stay a little while to watch our Lord quickening His pace and walking ahead of His disciples. Why is He hastening? When many are travelling together on foot, if the spirit of charity reigns, the stronger accommodate their pace to the wants of the weaker ones. We may be sure that this ordinarily would be our Saviour's practice. Why then this exception? He has already furnished the answer. He has told us His secret. *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished (St. Luke xii. 50).* As the time draws near, His suppressed desires are breaking forth. Daniel by his desires abbreviated the days of captivity. The yearnings of our Blessed Lord hasten the coming of the good time. Later, during His dark agony, when He allowed fear and desolation to come to His Sacred Heart, still all the while He was longing and thirsting for the hour in which His Sacred Blood should begin to flow for our salvation.

This desire, this straitening of the Heart of our Lord, is still further explained by His other word: *I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* (St. Luke xii.).

Till His Sacred Blood is shed, the fire of love which He longs for will not spread. As He walks in haste, therefore, His loving Heart is saying to His Father with the holy impatience of charity: *Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Sion: for it is time to have mercy on it, for the time is come (Palm ci. 14).*

O, what will be the gratitude of our Blessed Saviour to every one who helps Him to spread the Divine fire which He longs so much to see enkindled!

Consider, too, that when we bear pain with patience, though all the while we are wishing for relief, He rewards and blesses us for this resignation. And yet how far distant is this patience of our infirmity from His own hunger and thirst to suffer for our salvation! His most compassionate and grateful Heart makes so much of all our weak efforts. Magdalen's devotion at His sacred feet is to be preached wherever the Gospel of His own Life and sacred Death is preached. "*Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster?*" (Palm cxii.). *Fac cor amans Jesu mei, Fac ut nos amemus Te.*

B. *And they were astonished, and following were afraid.* A fortnight before, when Jesus proposed to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus from his sleep, the Apostles remonstrated. They well knew what their Master had to fear from the implacable malice of the Pharisees and Rulers. Now, this great miracle has added fresh fuel to the raging fire, and the danger is much greater and more imminent. They have reason to be frightened when they see their Divine Master hurrying forward to meet such enmity. *Anima Christi, sanctifica me; Passio Christi, conforta me.* Sacred Heart of Jesus, give us some share of that love which is *strong as death.*

## STATION II.

*Then Jesus took unto Him the Twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death: and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said (St. Matt. xx.; St. Luke xviii.; St. Mark x.).*

A. Note here the circumstances of the Passion which are most impressed upon our Lord's mind.

(1) He shall be betrayed by His own Apostle to His enemies, the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) they shall condemn Him to death; (3) they, the Rulers of His own people, shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles, to aliens who have no sympathy or kindness at all for Him; (4) *to be mocked*; (5) *and scourged*; (6) *and crucified*.

This short sentence includes the whole terrible story. Our Lord has every detail present to His mind and Heart.

B. Let us remember also that all this intimate and accurate and complete knowledge of every circumstance of His Sacred Passion has been present to our Saviour from the first moment of His Incarnation. And a great part of this overwhelming secret He has, no doubt, disclosed to His Most Holy Mother during those hours when after the work of the day they sat together in the evening in the Holy House at Nazareth. Then was her heart burning while He explained to her what was written concerning Him by Moses and the Prophets. For surely, if in the days of old the Lord, when about to chastise the crimes of Sodom, said: *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* (Genesis xviii.), we cannot believe that He would hide from Holy Mary all that He was about to do and she was about to share in—to the end, to the very end. Her grace was growing, her merit was being multiplied exceedingly every hour of her life by this foreknowledge.

The Sacred Passion was, therefore, not merely the work of one day and one night. It was lifelong. Every day and every hour He could most truly say, and she could unite with her Son's words: *My Heart hath expected, and is expecting, reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.).

Has He not good reason to say to us, *Remember Me: Forget not the kindness of thy Surety?* (Ecclesi. xxix.). Even if we do no more for Him, at the very least should not our remembrance of Him be lifelong? *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem (O Calvary), let my right hand be forgotten. Let*

*my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember thee. If I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxvi.). C. *And they understood none of these things, and the word was hid from them.*

The inspired author of the Book of Wisdom says to God: *With what circumspection hast Thou judged Thy own children* (c. xii.). That is, with the most loving and compassionate care He considers every circumstance that is in their favour. But it is not only when He is judging, but at all times and everywhere we find our Lord full of this tender care and circumspection for His disciples and *the people who stand about* (St. John xi.). Though they at present understand not, yet He utters this clear prophecy of His Death and Resurrection, in order that afterwards when they call to mind how He had clearly foretold all that He was to suffer, their terrified souls may be strengthened by the remembrance of the prophecy.

He well knows, however, how troubled and full of fear their hearts are at this moment, and He takes care that His words do not so add to their terror as to do them harm. *The bruised reed He shall not break* (St. Matt. xii. 20). Therefore *this word was hid from them*.

D. *This word was hid from them.*

Consider too that there are times when, much against His will, our most compassionate Saviour is obliged to leave us in blindness and hide His words from us. When weeping over Jerusalem, His lament was: *If thou hadst known, but now these things are hidden from thy eyes* (St. Luke xix.). *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them* (St. John xii.).

O Lord, chastise me in other ways; but not in Thy wrath by blindness of heart.



## STATION III.

*Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her two sons, adoring, and asking something of Him (St. Matt. xx. 20).*

*And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us. But He said to them: What would you that I should do for you? (St. Mark x. 35, 36). And she said to Him (and they said): Grant to us that we may sit (that my two sons may sit) one on Thy right hand and one on Thy left hand in Thy glory (St. Matt. xx.; St. Mark x.).*

A. How fully St. Luke's words are verified: *They understood not the things that were said.* Our Lord is telling the story of His Passion in all its details, and eagerly hurrying on to suffering and death: but these two Apostles, with their mother, are full of desire to have joy and glory without the suffering, and are plotting secretly that they may have a larger and better share than their brethren. What a contrast, Lord Jesus, between the love of Thy humble Heart and the selfishness of ours! What a contrast, too, between these Apostles as they are now, and as they will be after the Sacred Passion has borne all its fruit in years to come, when this same John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, so often repeats in his venerable old age his golden sermon, "Little children, love one another."

B. How often our desires are like to theirs! We say indeed with Holy Church, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, that is, "Grant, O Lord, to us sinners some part and fellowship with Thy martyrs"; but our interpretation of the prayer not unfrequently is: "Grant us, O Lord, fellowship with Thy martyrs in Heaven"; yes! but if some fellowship with them in their sufferings here on earth is proposed to us as a necessary preparation for partnership with them in Heaven, are our hearts ready to accept the

conditions? Oh, no! "From their sufferings on earth, O Lord, deliver us."

C. *Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask Thou wouldst do it for us.* They want our Lord to bind Himself before He hears their petition. They forget how He knows all things, *looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts* (Ecclus. xxiii.). They forget how He knew beyond Jordan the moment in which Lazarus died at Bethany.

Whenever we wish to ensnare any one by engaging him to promise in the dark, is not this a sure sign that our desire is evil? *He who does evil hates the light* (St. John iii.). Herod leaped into the trap when he swore to give to Salome, the dancing daughter of Herodias, whatever she might ask, without having heard her petition. Afterwards the King was sad; but *because of his oath*, and through a weak fear of what his guests would think, he committed the horrible murder. We must make no promises in the dark, still less sign documents, without knowing what we put our hand to, and to what we become liable. The Holy Spirit says to the man who has become surety for his friend: *Run about, make haste: stir up thy friend; give not sleep to thy eyes: neither let thy eyelids slumber. Deliver thyself—as a bird from the hand of the fowler* (Prov. vi.).

We must also bear in mind that if in an evil hour we have made a sinful promise, it is a greater sin to keep it, and a virtuous act to break it.

D. *He said to them, What would you that I should do to you?* Our Blessed Saviour knew their thought quite well, and what their petition was to be. If a father of a family were making known to his children heavy troubles that were come upon him, that he was to be disgraced, imprisoned, and heavily punished, and that, moreover, he was actually suffering acute pain from a very dangerous ailment, and if, immediately after his sad story, one of his children were to begin begging for some gratification and indulgence for himself, the father might well complain

of this ill-timed selfishness. But our Saviour, meek and humble of Heart (St. Matt. xi.), asks gently, *What would you that I should do to you?*

Sometimes the mere putting into words of such selfish petitions shows us how base and unworthy they are, and makes us ashamed of them.

E. Let us here reflect upon ourselves a little while. Our Blessed Lord is full of charity for us also. If He were now to say to us, *What would you that I should do to you?* how should we answer? When He said to the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas of Aquin, "You have written well of Me, Thomas, what reward shall I give you?" the answer was, "Nothing but Thyself, my Lord". To a similar question, another Saint made answer, *Aut pati, aut mori*—"Give me suffering or death, O Lord"; a third, "Not death, but suffering, my Lord".

When our Saviour was giving His gifts to St. Peter, the true-hearted Apostle put in a word for St. John. So must we, even in our prayers, shun selfishness, and when asking for ourselves remember the wants of others. Share thy morsel. *Eat thy bread with the hungry* (Tobias iv.).

#### STATION IV.

*And Jesus said to them: Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of? or be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised? But they said to Him, We can. And Jesus saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink, but to sit on My right hand or My left is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father* (St. Mark x. 39, seq.; St. Matt. xx. 22, seq.).

A. *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* We sometimes have aspirations after a profound humility, close union with our Lord in prayer, and ardent love at the time of Holy Communion. Our Lord might answer these desires with this question, *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* Can you pay the price of the precious pearl

you covet? "*Negotiamini*," He said on the morrow to His disciples, *traffic till I come*. In our spiritual life we have to buy graces as we buy meat and drink for our natural life. And in both lives the rule laid down by St. Paul holds good. *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings* (2 Cor. ix.).

If we pay a good price by desires and sacrifices, we shall get large graces. If we spend very little, we shall get only a little. Our Father in Heaven is always much more liberal to us than we are to Him. He always gives us, as our Saviour tells us, more than full value for the price we pay—*good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over* (St. Luke vi.). But still there is a rule and measure to be followed. *For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again* (St. Matt. vii.). This is true of our dealings both with God and with men. Hence, when we expect to get some large grace, such as a difficult conversion, or a very fervent love, merely because we have said three Hail Marys, this may be more unreasonable than to expect to buy an estate and a mansion for three half-crowns.

B. *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* Here is what sweetens wonderfully the sufferings of Christ's holy disciples; they know that they are being allowed to drink with their Master out of His bitter chalice. No Christian need ever suffer alone. For as St. Thomas writes in his hymn, *Se nascens dedit socium*. Our Saviour says, *My yoke is sweet* (St. Matt. xi.), because He was born to be yoked to each of us; to bear the burden of life with each. Every sorrow that we feel He has felt far more intensely; and thus sanctified and anointed our sorrow. Whenever we are chosen by God for any suffering, we are highly privileged and called to drink with our Saviour out of His own cup.

"O merciful Lord Jesus, to us sinners also grant some part and fellowship with Thy martyrs."

C. Or (can you) be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?

Holy Church recognises three baptisms — *fluminis, sanguinis*, of desire, of water, of blood.

According to the teaching of theologians, a heathen who had never even heard of Baptism, if he makes a true act of contrition for his sins, and desires to do whatever is pleasing to God, by this act has an implicit desire of Baptism, and is raised to the state of grace.

Holy Church also honours as martyrs some who were never baptised by water, but were baptised in their own blood and therefore certainly in desire also. Whether in this latter case contrition is required, or merely attrition, is disputed, but it is considered quite certain that God will give the martyr all the requisite dispositions.

Oh, how wise are they who often make fervent acts of contrition, which so surely do the work of absolution!

D. Can you be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised? Can you shed your blood? Certainly not, unless a special grace be given, such as the martyrs get. Satan sometimes troubles holy souls by putting this question, "Could you die for Christ?" and then himself answering, "No, you never could," with the view of bringing in hopeless thoughts. The safe answer to such a temptation is, "Certainly not, unless God strengthens me; but I am sure that God can strengthen me, and will strengthen me, if I need the grace."

E. But they said to Him, *We can*. These blessed Apostles soon after found out their mistake, and learned even to glory in their infirmity. But, at the same time, their answer came from a consciousness that they had much love for their Divine Master.

Holy Apostles of Christ, obtain for us some share of that heavenly fire, and a strong sense of our own weakness.

F. *Jesus saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink.* To His chosen ones, to those to whom He afterwards said,

*I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends, the grand and special promise that He makes is this: "You shall, I promise you, before you die, drink of My chalice". To His own Most Blessed Mother, as they conversed together in Nazareth, this, doubtless, was the assurance that He often repeated in order to console her, that she should be with Him to the end, and share His bitter chalice to the dregs. His golden promise afterwards to St. Paul was, I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name's sake (Acts ix.). How blind then are we if we believe that every suffering is a calamity and a proof of God's wrath; and that prosperity, and nothing but prosperity, is a sure sign of His favour!*

He sends suffering in His mercy to atone here for past sin, to do here quickly the slow work of Purgatory.

He sends suffering also to prevent sin; and to draw us out of sin, as suffering brought the Prodigal home to Him.

Lastly, He sends suffering to His chosen ones, as to St. Paul; and these chosen ones then become, like Himself, Saviours unto many.

G. Who, on the other hand, are so truly to be pitied as those who sin and prosper? sin and laugh? sin and feast sumptuously? sin and sleep soundly? Why do the wicked live? holy Job asks. Why are they advanced and strengthened with riches? Their houses are secure and peaceable, and the rod of God is not upon them. Their cattle have conceived, and failed not: their cow has calved, and is not deprived of her fruit. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to Hell (c. xxi.).

H. But to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.

The sons of Zebedee, St. John and St. James, were cousins of our Lord—His brethren, as the Gospel calls them. Many, both in State and Church, have been unfaithful

stewards and given to relatives and friends places and offices which God never intended them to have.

The mother of the two Apostles was probably cherishing a fond hope that the rights of kin would secure for them high positions. Our Saviour sets a holier thought before them. "Though all power is given to Me, yet at the same time *I and the Father are one* (St. John x.). His will is My will; therefore My work on earth is to dispense offices not to kinsmen, but to those whom He has destined for them."

Thus, therefore, all delegates of our Lord in Church and State are to be wise and faithful stewards, and not to give to relatives and friends places which God has not intended them to have.

#### STATION V.

*And the ten hearing it, were moved to indignation against the two brethren, and began to be much displeased with James and John* (St. Mark x.; St. Matt. xx.).

A. Who told the ten this news which displeased them so much, and made them indignant? We know not. That it was not our Blessed Saviour, we may doubtless be quite sure. St. James says truly that the tongue is a *restless evil; a world of iniquity*. What do I gain by running about and telling others news that makes them angry, and bitter, and full of uncharitable thoughts?

The Psalmist says: *I am partner with all who fear Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxviii.). How wise it is to traffic in this way! I multiply my own graces by being glad at the good done by others. I become partner in their good. Surely a most easy and pleasant way of growing rich in grace is to become partners with the holy. Our Lord has, in His infinite goodness, given us this attractive method of winning grace. Tobias invited to his table those who feared God, and thus became a partner in their holiness (c. ii.). But what madness it is, when we have already our own many sins weighing us down, to increase our load a thousand-fold by becoming partners in the sins

of others. If my tongue utters words that make ten other men bitter and angry or uncharitable, by that word I become partner with ten other sinners.

B. *The ten*, however, had no cause to be angry, or troubled. No harm was to come to them. The prayer of James and John had not prevailed. If James and John had secured to themselves the best places unfairly, Peter and the others might have been disturbed; but they have lost nothing, and the sons of Zebedee have gained nothing. The only sufferers so far are the two who made this selfish petition. The ten suffer no harm till they become angry, and so harm themselves. They ought to have pitied James and John, and prayed for them that our Lord might renew a right spirit within them. This is what they would certainly have done in similar circumstances later on in their lives, after the coming down of the Holy Ghost. And this is what we must do.

*I say to you that hear: Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.). This invaluable secret our Lord whispers into every soul that will hear.

"Grant us, O Lord, grace to be among those who listen to Thy voice."

"I never knew what it was to be light-hearted," a young man said in the flower of his youth, "till I was induced to practise this counsel of our Lord by praying earnestly for all who annoyed me. I now have not one enemy in the whole world."

The devil will be very loth to bring annoyances to those who turn them into precious pearls by this charitable method of praying earnestly for those who ill-treat them.

## STATION VI.

But Jesus called them to Him, and said: *You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that are greater exercise power over them. It shall not be so among you: but whoever will be greater among you let him be your minister. And he that shall be first among you shall be your servant* (St. Matt. xx. 25—27).

A. *The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them.*

*Vae victis*—"Woe to the conquered," was a received maxim in the old world. The conqueror was to crush the conquered mercilessly, to heap shame and sorrow on them, in order to add pomp to his own triumph.

*Let our strength be the law of justice, the men of the world say, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth* (Wisdom ii.).

*The wild ass is the lion's prey in the desert, so also the poor are devoured by the rich. And as humility is an abomination to the proud, so also the rich man abhorreth the poor* (Ecclus. xiii.).

*Man when he was in honour did not understand* (Psalms xlviii.). That is, when a man is placed on a pinnacle, in a high position, pride often renders him giddy and most foolish. He acts as if he were no longer a man, but a god, and thus becomes as low as the brute beast. *He is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them* (Psalms xlviii.). What wonder that God established that rule: *To him that is little, mercy is granted, but the mighty shall be mightily tormented*! (Wisdom vi.).

On this point, as on so many others, Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, has made *all things new* (Apoc. xxi.). One of the greatest miracles of the Christian Church is that in private family life, and in public life, and in the Church, they that are first are so often seen serving their brethren. *He that shall be first shall be your servant.*

## SCENE II.

## OUTSIDE JERICHO.

## STATION I.

*Now it came to pass when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain man sat by the way begging* (St. Luke xviii. 35). *And they came to Jericho. And as he went out of Jericho with His disciples and a very great multitude, Bartimeus, the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the way begging* (St. Mark x. 46).

*And when they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way* (St. Matt. xx. 29, 30).

I. Observe. *When He drew nigh to Jericho* (St. Luke xviii.). *As He went out of Jericho* (St. Mark x.). *When He went out from Jericho* (St. Matt. xx.). St. Chrysostom, in his Preface to St. Matthew, observes that if the Evangelists had agreed in every small detail, enemies would have said that they simply copied one another; whereas now, their discrepancies help to prove that they are independent witnesses. These discrepancies, however, when carefully studied, can generally be brought sufficiently into harmony. If we knew all the circumstances, we should easily reconcile the narratives.

In this instance, besides this discrepancy: *When He drew nigh to Jericho* (St. Luke) and *as He went out* (St. Mark), we have also this other:

II. *A certain man sat by the way begging* (St. Luke); *Behold two blind men sitting by the way* (St. Matt.); *Bartimeus, the blind man, sat by the way begging* (St. Mark).

Were there then two blind men or one? Some commentators think three in all; one as they went in, two as they came out. All agree that there were two, at least, and that probably Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, was more known than the other, and is therefore specially mentioned.

With regard to the question whether our Lord worked the miracle before going into Jericho, or as He came out, some modern writers offer this suggestion. There were, they say, two towns of Jericho close to each other, one the old town, destroyed by Josue and rebuilt by Hiel of Bethel, who, according to Josue's prophecy, lost his first-born son when he laid the foundations, and his youngest when he set up the gates (3 Kings xvi. 24).

The other, the new town, the magnificent work of Herod the Great and his son, Archelaus. If the miracle was worked between these two towns, it might be said to be as He came out of the old town, and as He was going into the more important new town.

Another answer is given by Father à Lapide and others, that the blind man mentioned by St. Luke begged for his cure when our Lord was entering, but did not obtain it till next day when He was going out. But perhaps the best solution is Father Coleridge's, who thinks that there were two cures, one as our Lord went in (St. Luke), and the other as He came out (St. Mark), and that St. Matthew, according to his usual practice, mentions the two together, intending to record what was substantial and important without emphasising time or place.

Jericho, with the large plain round it which stretches from the mountains of Judea to the Jordan, was like a green spot in a desert. On account of the abundance and variety of its fruit-trees, it was called "the garden of perfumes". It is said that when snow was falling in Jerusalem, the inhabitants of Jericho could wear their summer clothing. The town is supposed to have stood about six or seven miles from the Jordan. Scarcely a vestige remains above ground at the present day. The English Jordan Hotel, the Russian Hospice, and a few huts now represent this ancient city of merchants.

## STATION II.

*And when he (the blind man) heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant; and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by (St. Luke xviii. 36, 37).*

A. *He heard the multitude.* St. Mark says, *a very great multitude.* Our Blessed Lord's Sacred Heart is drawing as many as He can to Him on this last journey, *as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings* (St. Matt. xxiii.). He is multiplying works of mercy, knowing, as He said Himself, *that the night cometh in which no man can work* (St. John ix.). Are we imitating Him? As life passes are we growing more and more heedful of St. Peter's warning word: *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more that by good works you make your calling and election sure?* (2 St. Peter i.).

B. *They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.* How many, alas! there are who, if told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, would give no heed! They

have other things to mind: their yoke of oxen; their farm; their wedding. When the great vision of the Lord sitting on His throne burst upon the eyes of Isaiah, and then passed away, he exclaimed after it was gone: *Woe is me! because I held my peace: because I am a man of unclean lips* (c. vi.). Alas! alas! what shall a Christian say when his day of privilege here on earth is past? When he recalls to mind during the long leisure of eternity that in his case it was not *Jesus of Nazareth passing by*, once or twice, or at distant intervals; but always, every day and every night abiding with him, close to him, within the holy tabernacle. *Woe is me! because I held my peace*, and did not speak to Him! And when the tolling of the bell, or the voice of a friend reminded me that Jesus of Nazareth was about to appear on the altar and to show forth His Death again in the Holy Mass, *Woe is me! I held my peace*, and went away to be busy with trifles which I preferred. Alas! now it is too late. *The harvest is past; the summer is ended, and we are not saved* (Jerem. viii.).

## STATION III.

*Who, when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out and to say: O Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him that he might hold his peace; but he cried a great deal the more: O Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me* (St. Mark x.; St. Matt. xx.).

A. "Where there is a will there is a way," we say. When a man really wants to be cured he knows how to ask for it. We have all sufficient ability to make this blind man's prayer: *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!* Or, better still, *Jesus, Son of Mary, have mercy on me!* And, oh, how well spent is time given to such a cry! Who ever persevered in that cry and was disappointed?

We have only to practise ourselves till we have learned to *ask in faith, nothing wavering*; so St. James tells

us. *For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord (c. i., 6, 7).* It is then essential that we persevere till we can ourselves hope and trust that our prayer will be heard.

B. But many rebuked him that he might hold his peace.

So is it with us. Many unseen spirits, who pretend to be friendly and to advise us well, counsel us to give up our prayer and assure us that it is useless. This happens to all who begin to cry out for mercy. *Why, O Lord, the Psalmist exclaims, why are they multiplied that afflict me? Many are they who rise up against me. Many say to my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God (Psalm iii.).* But, taught from above, this afflicted servant of God knew better. His answer was: *But Thou, O Lord, art my Protector, my glory, and the lifter-up of my head. I have cried to the Lord with my voice, and He hath heard me from His holy hill; that is, from Calvary. For Calvary is now His holy hill.*

C. How good a grace was given to Bartimeus and his comrade! How glad they were afterwards of their pious obstinacy! *He cried a great deal the more.* St. Ignatius of Loyola lays down for us all this golden rule, that if urged strongly by unseen wicked spirits to break off our prayer as useless, we should always, on the contrary, prolong it resolutely and cry out *a great deal the more.* If we adopt this rule, the lying spirits very soon give over tormenting us with such hopeless thoughts. For to them it is gall and wormwood to be conquered by such inferior creatures as we are. *Resist the devil and he will fly from you (St. James iv.).*

D. Contrast the hearts of even good men with the Heart of our Lord. Men are tyrannical, and insist that the blind shall hold their peace and not disturb Jesus. But He is glad indeed to be disturbed in this way. *Come to Me, He says, and He means His word, Come to Me all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you (St. Matt. xi.).* Come to Me, not once only, not seven times, nor seventy times seven times, but whenever you are burdened.

His name is Jesus, Saviour. This name He has to earn by saving. His one work is to seek and to save them that are lost (St. Matt. xviii.). The physician is, as has been said above, on the look-out for the sick, the brave seaman in the life-boat is intent on those drowning. Even so, our Blessed Saviour is ever looking for the lost sheep; one whose soul wants healing and saving.

#### STATION IV.

*And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee; who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to Him (St. Mark x. 49, 50).*

#### A. Be of better comfort.

Were they who took this message the same who just now were rebuking the blind man for the noise he was making? They may have been others more tender-hearted, or they may have been the same, who began now to see, as we say in familiar language, "which way the wind is blowing". How often it happens when men are raising a cry, that they instantly change if the master or some leading man boldly takes the other side!

B. When we have been praying long for a grace, and the tempter has been multiplying discouraging thoughts, suddenly our good Angel begins to speak, saying: *Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee.*

Oh! how truly wise is the counsel of Ecclesiastics: *Make not haste in time of clouds. Wait on God in patience; join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end. In thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. Believe God, and He will recover thee. Ye that fear the Lord, wait for His mercy. Ye that fear the Lord, believe Him, and your reward shall not be made void. Ye that fear the Lord, hope in Him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight (c. ii.).*

What moments are there in life so full of contentment

and tranquil joy as those when, after a season of desolation, our Lord or His good Angel begins to speak again words of comfort? *Thou shalt say in that day : I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for Thou wast angry with me : Thy wrath is turned away, and Thou hast comforted me* (Isaiah xii.).

C. Observe how meek and gentle our Lord remains, amid the mistakes and faults of His followers. When the sons of Zebedee made their selfish petition, and now when His disciples are officiously rebuking the blind, He does not show anger, nor ever swerve from His course of patient charity.

D. *Who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to Him.* The blind man did not need to be called twice. His cloak which he wanted as a protection against all manner of weather was now an incumbrance. He cast it aside and leaped up, and, guided no doubt by some who either shared our Lord's compassion, or were now sorry for having rebuked him, soon stood before the face of Jesus. What a daybreak is coming to this forlorn sufferer after the long and dreary night !

E. But, alas ! how often has our Lord called me and called me in vain, and I never leaped up or even rose reluctantly, but hardened my heart and would not come.

F. How easy it would be to rise quickly in the morning, if we would listen to our good Angel reminding us that Jesus, the Hidden God, is on the altar, waiting for us and calling us. Our hearts would answer in gladness, *Deus, Deus meus*—"O God, my God, to Thee do I wake at dawn of day".

#### STATION V.

*And Jesus answering, said, What wilt thou that I should do to thee ? And the blind man said : Rabboni, that I may see. And Jesus saith to him : Receive thy sight ; go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw and followed Him in the way* (St. Mark x. 51 ; St. Luke xviii. 41).

*And Jesus stood and called them, and said, What wilt thou that I do for you ? They say to Him, Lord, that our eyes be opened. And Jesus having compassion on them, touched their eyes. And immediately they saw and followed Him* (St. Matt. xx.).

*And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God* (St. Luke xviii. 43).

A. *What wilt thou that I should do to thee ?*  
"Attentive"—look well, and listen attentively, and mark

how our Lord, though He knows all things, yet, according to His constant practice, insists on hearing from our own lips what we wish for. Because He loves us so truly and His delights are to be with us, in order to oblige us to stay with Him and converse with Him, He acts as if He knew nothing till we tell Him all.

B. *What wilt thou that I do ?* When God appeared to Solomon and said, *Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee*, Solomon's choice was, *Give me wisdom*. And God, well pleased with the choice, said, *Because this choice hath pleased thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches and wealth and glory, nor the lives of them that hate thee, nor many days of life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge—wisdom and knowledge are granted to thee. And I will give thee riches and wealth and glory, so that none of the things before thee, nor after thee, shall be like thee* (2 Paral. i.). This is what our Blessed Saviour has said to us also : *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added* (St. Matt. vi.) ; that is, meat and drink, and the other things of this earth.

The earnest prayer and craving of some men is for evil things, as when Herodias asked for the head of John the Baptist. Others desire vehemently money or better health. St. Augustine writes how he in childhood prayed sometimes most fervently that he might not be chastised for some fault. The strong desires of our heart are so powerful with God that they should not be wasted on things earthly : they should be kept to do the violence



necessary for winning great graces and the Kingdom of Heaven.

C. *And the blind man said, Rabbouni, that I may see.*

*Rabbouni* was the word used by Magdalen when our Lord appeared to her at His tomb. The interpreters translate it by, "My Master," or, "Master mine". They consider it a more reverential word than *Rabbi*. Perhaps, too, there is more heart and affection in it.

*Rabbouni, that I may see. Cor Jesu amans*—"Loving Heart of Jesus, that I may see," see myself and see Thee; see at last all the hidden sins that have been a barrier between my soul and Thee; see all my own past sins with contrition and with hope, so that I may now find it impossible to look any longer on the faults of my neighbours; and then, at length, see also all Thy loveliness, all Thy compassion, all Thy charity, that I may love Thee, and love all men for Thy sake.

D. *And Jesus having compassion on them, touched their eyes.* Observe this compassion of our Blessed Saviour. How much more is He moved to great pity as He looks on the blindness of our souls! *Thou sayest, I am made rich, and have need of nothing! and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee, anoint thy eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see* (Apoc. iii.).

E. *And immediately they saw*; and the first object that met their awakened eye-sight was the sacred face of Jesus and His eyes of mercy. Oh, what a surprise! what joy unspeakable!

Yet what is this joy and this surprise but a faint image of what is coming, if all be well with us, when we pass from this dark world and wake up in the admirable light, and find the eye of our Lord resting on us in mercy and great love, and His Sacred Heart saying, *Come, thou blessed of My Father?*

F. The first gaze of those dead eyes restored to life was for their God. Our God loves first-fruits. Oh, how He yearns that the first years of childhood may be kept

sacred for Him! How consoled too is His suffering Heart if when we wake up from the blindness of sleep, the first glances of our souls are turned to Him!

Therefore it is that Satan makes such a persevering struggle to rob our Father in Heaven of the souls of children, those first-fruits in which He has so much delight. With what a gratitude will our Saviour welcome us if we fight a good fight for His little ones and are able to say with holy Job: *I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey* (c. xxix.).

G. *And he followed Him, glorifying God.* The blind men did not forget, as the nine lepers had forgotten, to give thanks and glorify God. They followed our Lord, it is said, to Bethany; and the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, which may contain many true statements, records that a few days later Bartimeus spoke out loudly in defence of Jesus in the Praetorium of Pilate, testifying courageously, "I was blind, He touched me, and I see".

H. *And the people gave praise to God.*

How often and often we receive greater graces from God than this cure! Every absolution, each Holy Communion, each assistance at Holy Mass, the grace of our Lady's protection. Then also, each time we are helped to conquer a grievous temptation what hearty thanks do we not owe to our Father in Heaven, Who is always bestowing favours, and always preserving us from evil?

And again, we must learn from these Galileans and these Jews also to glorify God and praise Him for the graces and blessings He bestows on others around us; for the conversion of sinners, the call of heathens to the Church, the holiness and zeal we meet with among the faithful. Indeed, if our thanksgiving is to keep pace with the goodness of our God to us, we must carry out thoroughly the wish of Holy Church by praising and thanking Him *semper et ubique*—at all times and in every place.

## SCENE III.

JERICHO. ZACHEUS

## STATION I.

*And entering in, He walked [was walking] through Jericho*  
(St. Luke xix. 1).

A. Look at our Lord. Watch Him attentively. He is not fixing His thoughts on the fine buildings, or the fragrant gardens, or the luxuriant orchards; but walking with His face and His Heart set towards Jerusalem and Calvary. But meanwhile, as He goes, He is always seeking and saving those that were lost.

B. Men travel now so rapidly that they look upon a journey as a necessary and unavoidable break in their work, which they intend to resume when they come to the end of it. It is not so with our Saviour. His day of travelling is always a working day. He travels slowly, on foot, surrounded by His disciples, teaching them and healing the sick, and converting sinners. St. Peter afterwards, in the house of Cornelius, the first convert from the Gentiles, described these journeys of our Lord in these words: *He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him* (Acts x. 38).

Some pious persons pray at Mass in the morning that our Lord will during the day throw some one in their way to whom they may do good. An officer used a few years ago to tell how some words said to him by a chance companion in a railway carriage, as he was going to Southampton to sail for India, sank into his soul like a good seed, and bore fruit some years later when he was received into the Church. Many earnest prayers for the living and the dead may be said on a journey, and the providence of God may bless us by bringing near to us some one to whom we can give valuable help. To be ready for such golden opportunities we ought to study

our religion well, and know how to remove skilfully prejudices and fears that stand in the way of grace. How many souls St. Francis Xavier won while journeying!

## STATION II.

*And behold there was a certain man named Zachæus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, Who He was, and he could not because of the crowd, because he was low of stature* (vv. 2, 3).

The district round Jericho was exceptionally productive, and was a great centre of commerce. There was a flourishing trade, especially in fruits and balsams. A large revenue, therefore, went from thence to the coffers of the Roman Emperors, who, much to the disgust of the Jews, had laid on them heavy taxes. There were, therefore, many collectors of taxes in Jericho, and Zachæus was their chief. He was himself rich. For the Romans look care to select for such a post rich men who could sometimes advance the money wanted by the Government, and also make up deficiencies when there were defaulters. The Chief Collector had plenty of opportunities of repaying himself with interest by extortion. No wonder that the Jews hated and despised these tax-gatherers in the pay of Rome. Probably they often had reason to chafe under the injustice practised. For we observe that when the publicans came to St. John to be baptised, and in their turn asked him, *Master, what shall we do?* he said to them, *Do nothing more than that which is appointed to you* (St. Luke ii.). That is to say, do not extort anything beyond the appointed tax.

A. *And he sought to see Jesus.*

The Chief Collector is not moved by a mere idle curiosity. Though he has not yet seen Jesus, our Blessed Lord has seen him and fixed His Heart on him, and has begun to draw him. *With an everlasting love I have loved thee, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee* (Jerem. xxxi.).

“Prevent, O Lord, that is, forestall our actions by Thy holy inspirations; and turn Thine eyes of mercy also upon us.”

B. Follow Zachæus and watch the many eager attempts he makes to see Christ Jesus. But what can one of low stature do in a large crowd such as this? A faint-

hearted man whose desires are not strong would give up the attempt, and go away to find comfort in a good dinner, or in counting his money, or in some pleasant conversation. But Zachæus has a strong desire. He really wishes and wills, and has a share of that *beata violentia*, as St. Ambrose calls it, which bears off the Kingdom of Heaven.

A weak desire for grace falls far short of the "holy violence" with which the saints fought their good fight.

Blessed Mother of God, obtain for us a strong will for good, that we may continue to ask, to seek and to knock till we receive and find, and till the door is opened to us.

Call to mind certain desires we have felt at times at Holy Mass which seemed so fervent that we wondered why they were not granted. How long did they last? We went to our breakfast, we read the news, we busied ourselves about some trifles, and we found our consolation and contentment in these things. The passing desires of the morning have vanished. Strong desires do not pass away so quickly. Rachel yearning for her lost children could not be consoled by other things.

### STATION III.

*And running before he climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see Jesus, for He was to pass that way (v. 4).*

#### A. For He was to pass that way.

When Herod wished to see the child Jesus, not in order to adore Him but to kill Him, our Lord knew well how to elude his search. The Wise Men were directed to go home by another road. So now, too, our Saviour, Who knows all things, could, if so minded, change His route and disappoint the chief of the publicans. But He has no will to do that. He Himself is inspiring Zachæus and directing his endeavours. When we are doing work that God has inspired and chosen for us, He assists us and

blesses our efforts throughout it. But if we begin without Him, we may have to go on without Him.

#### *He climbed up into a sycamore-tree.*

Those learned in natural history tell us that what is here called a sycamore-tree, was a fig-tree peculiar to Jericho and other warm districts of Judea, which had leaves like those of the mulberry. According to these writers, the name sycamore would simply mean in the Greek, the fig-mulberry. It is said to have had a short stem or bole, and spreading branches.

B. Zachæus being a man of business has a practical turn, and sees ways and means that duller men might not think of. He discovers a commanding position and loses no time in taking short cuts to secure it.

Contemplate this rich man; the Chief of the publicans running and climbing the tree, in order to see Jesus of Nazareth passing by. What will his servants think of him? and the sub-collectors? and the Jews above all, who have so strong a contempt for the whole race of tax-gatherers? How merclessly will they scoff at the little man, even as Saul's daughter Michol when she saw her husband David dancing before the Ark, *despised him in her heart!* (2 Kings vi.). He, a rich and important man, ought to be watching the procession from his carriage, or mounted on a fine horse, or from the window of a noble mansion, but not climb a tree like a beggar-boy.

But one stronger than all these human critics is drawing Zachæus. *No one can come to Me*, our Blessed Lord said, *except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him* (St. John vi.). His Father in Heaven is drawing him, and our Lord is secretly drawing him, and the blessed angels are watching, for there is soon to be great joy among them.

All ye holy angels and saints, pray for us that the fear of men and human respect may not deter us from doing all that is necessary to get near our Lord.

C. We sometimes cry out to our Lady: "Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb;" and yet the face of our Lord seems to remain

still hidden from us. How is this? When David pardoned Absalom and let him come back from exile, he still gave this command: *Let him return into his house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned into his house, and saw not the King's face* (2 Kings xiv.). So is it oftentimes with God's children; their sin is forgiven, but till they have passed through their Purgatory and the last farthing has been paid, they cannot see the face of God their Father. But there are fervent souls who cannot resign themselves to this hard lot. *This is the generation of them that seek Him; of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob* (Psalms xxiii.). Like Zachæus, these men of desires never rest till they have raised themselves above the crowd that seems to shut them out hopelessly from the sight of our Lord, and their strong yearnings soon prevail with Jesus. *For not from His heart hath He afflicted nor cast off the children of men* (Lament. iii.).

## STATION IV.

*And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up He saw him, and said to him: Zachæus, make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house* (v. 5).

A. *Make haste and come down.*

Most sudden, most unexpected, most surprising was this invitation to the mind of the publican; but on the part of our Lord it has been an eternal determination of His everlasting love. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee. Sursum corda.* Let us lift up our hearts and contemplate this long-reaching foresight of God—if we may so speak. Already He has made so many plans for our eternity in Heaven, and He is busy now with our future. How He will surprise us with new and most unexpected wonders of His boundless love. *I go to prepare a place for you* (St. John xiv.). *Let all flesh bless His holy name for ever, yea for ever and for ever* (Psalms cxlv.).

B. *Who is like the Lord our God, Who looketh down*

*on the low things in Heaven and on earth?* Who among all the wise men or great men of Judea or Galilee would have thought this morning that the eye of God was resting with unspeakable love on this Chief of the abhorred publicans? Holy writers counsel us to look on the sinner as a possible saint, one who may be God's child in Heaven; and on our present enemy as a future friend. This method of thinking makes charity much more easy.

C. *This day I must abide in thy house.*

Notice, too, the liberality of God; how He gives in good measure, *pressed down, shaken together, and running over.* Simeon had a promise that he should see the Saviour that was to come. He not only saw Him, but was allowed also to hold Him in his arms and to know and foretell His future. Zachæus craves just to see the face of Christ and His dress and His demeanour; he is given all this and much more. St. Augustine apostrophises Zachæus somewhat in this way:

*You long to see Him passing by the way:  
But He to make His home with you to-day.*

## STATION V.

*And he made haste and came down to receive Him with joy*

(v. 6).

A. The blind man did not, as we have seen, stay to be called twice when our Saviour asked for him. Neither did Magdalen when Martha whispered, *The Master is come and calleth for thee.* Zachæus is as prompt as they. *Zachæus, make haste and come down. And he made haste and came down.* What a contrast with those who when invited to our Lord's great feast, and though urged again and again, and even threatened with the worst consequences—*Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you*—(St. John vi.) begin all at once to make excuses (St. Luke xiv.). Shall we also make excuses? Our Lord says to us. *Will you also go away?* Oh, may we have grace to answer at once with St. Peter: *O Lord, to whom shall we*

go, if we leave you? For Thou hast the words of eternal life (St. John vi.).

*He made haste to come down.* St. Ambrose contemplating the scene and seeing Zachæus among the figs, says, "The ripe fruit drops at once from the tree at a slight touch".

B. *And received Him with joy.*

King Herod was greatly troubled and all Jerusalem with him, when the Wise Men announced that Jesus was born among them. The tax-gatherer receives Jesus with great joy. Simeon was filled with holy contentment and peace when allowed to hold the Divine Child in his arms, and was now willing to leave this world at once. *Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace.* Our Blessed Lady, when her Son was still in her womb, already said: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* How her joy and exultation and love grew day by day, as she knew Him more intimately! What disposition prevails in us when our Saviour is coming? when death seems near? or when He is coming to make His abode with us in Holy Communion? Are we frightened, and troubled, and do we wish to escape? Are we indifferent? Are we very glad and joyful? St. Paul wishes all to rejoice always, because *the Lord is near* (Philipp. iv.). Surely more especially when He is coming to us in Holy Communion. Is it not a sad sight for the blessed angels to see us approach to our Blessed Saviour with a heavy heart and most unwillingly? He loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix.), and must be greatly consoled, if, like Zachæus, we give Him a welcome with much joy.

## STATION VI.

*And when all saw it, they murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner (v. 7).*

A. *And when all saw it they murmured.* Does the word *all* necessarily include every one who was following Him in this last journey, or does it only apply to the crowd of townspeople who were also there? Not every one

assuredly, for clearly we must make many exceptions. His Apostles were already aware of His predilection for sinners. St. Magdalen would not join in any murmuring against Him, still less murmur because He went to abide with a sinner. It is even possible and not improbable that our Blessed Lady was with Him on this last journey, as the end was so near. For we know for certain that she was sometimes with Him during His Public Life (St. Mark iii.); and we have no certainty that she was not often near Him, looking at His sacred Face and listening to every word, her holy heart always united with every prayer and desire of His Sacred Heart. Some holy writers assume that she followed Him all through His Apostolic Life.

B. *They murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner.*

So did the Pharisee murmur when Christ allowed Magdalen the sinner to touch Him.

So, too, when the blind man defended Jesus, the Pharisees at once burst out against him as a sinner. *Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* (St. John ix.).

How strange, how sad a sight it must be to God's angels when one sinner condemns another sinner, because he is a sinner! For sad indeed it is even to us if a blind man scorns other men because they are blind. And yet so prone are we to judge and condemn in others what we do ourselves, that our Blessed Lord, in order to rescue us from this habit of intolerant pride and wickedness, has actually bound Himself by this most strange covenant: *Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned* (St. Luke vi.). Can this be true? we might exclaim. If one of our judges were to say to murderers found guilty and sentenced: "You will be set free if you do not judge and condemn other murderers," there would be an uproar throughout the country. The press would be unanimous in an outcry that if such wanton indulgence is shown to murderers, the country will soon swarm with them. And yet our Blessed

Lord sees that we are so madly bent on judging and condemning others for the very sins we have committed and are committing ourselves, that He solemnly pledges Himself to this covenant, that if we judge not we shall not be judged. What can be more stupidly wicked and insane than while asking for mercy for myself which I badly want, to condemn others whose case is not at all worse than my own, if as bad?

C. Again and again let us read over and ponder on St. Paul's words to the Romans: *Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art, that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou doest the same things which thou judgest. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do these things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* (ii. 1, 3).

D. *Thou doest the same things which thou judgest.* A proud man is very indignant at the pride of another. A strong-willed tyrannical man inveighs loudly against the despotic tyranny of another. Immoral men outside the Church are quite sure that convents and monasteries are full of immorality.

E. I am a sinner, and if I wish our Lord to look with mercy on me, and come to me, I must of necessity wish Him to look with mercy also on all other sinners and to visit them likewise.

If from anger or resentment I except even one sinner, or one neighbour who, I think, has wronged me, I by that exception exclude myself from all chance of mercy, *For, if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences* (St. Matt. vi.).

#### STATION VII.

*But Zachæus, standing, said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have wronged any man, I restore him four-fold* (v. 8).

In certain cases the Jew who stole was required to give back four-fold, or even more. *If any man steal an ox or a sheep and kill*

*or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep* (Exodus xxii.). In most cases only double (Exodus xxii.). Sometimes only one-fifth over and above the sum defrauded (Levit. vi. 5).

A. Did our Lord speak any words to Zachæus to work this great conversion? It is possible. To the Scribes and Pharisees He had said: *Give alms, and behold all things are clean to you* (St. Luke xi.). As a publican's danger would be covetousness and hard-heartedness, our Saviour may with some words have taught the contrite collector on this point: we are quite sure that He spoke inwardly at least to his heart.

However this may be, we have a great lesson to learn from this admirable penitent. For we confess our sins and are absolved and say the short penance enjoined, and sometimes go away content as if we had fulfilled all justice. We forget two lessons which Zachæus teaches forcibly.

1. *First, that there is commonly a reparation still due.*

We know that offences there will be a long Purgatory in the next world for sins absolved in this. Why so? Are they not forgiven? Yes, they are forgiven; but there are two degrees in forgiveness. A criminal condemned to death is sometimes pardoned and set absolutely free. Sometimes he is so far forgiven that he shall not die, but there is a commutation annexed; he is to have penal servitude for a term of years. God also forgives in these two ways. Sometimes, as in Baptism, He forgives absolutely and entirely, so that the forgiven sinner, if he died immediately after the Baptism, would enter Heaven at once. If an adult who has sinned has even the sorrow of attrition for all his sins and receives Baptism, all the sins are forgiven and all the punishment remitted. If the adult at the time of his Baptism was not sorry for some mortal sin but still attached to it, the sacrament could have no good effect till he becomes sorry, at least with the sorrow of attrition; then the effects would be produced.

With regard to sins committed after Baptism and consequently with more light, the absolution has not necessarily as full an effect as Baptism has. The guilt is forgiven, but often with a commutation; that is to say, the grievous sin is forgiven and the penitent will never be cast away for that sin; but a debt of punishment remains of which the last farthing must, in one way or another, be paid.

The sanctity and the justice and the charity of God require that a reparation be made. I say the charity of God, because His very love for us compels Him to wish that we should be so contrite for sin, and love so much as to wish ourselves to make abundant reparation. He said when defending Magdalen, *Many sins are forgiven her because she loves much*; and He added: *But to whom less is forgiven he loveth less*. That is to say, when there is very abundant contrition the forgiveness is very full and may be equal to a Baptism. But if for want of this abundant contrition, as, for instance, when the absolved penitent has only the sorrow of attrition, the forgiveness is not so ample, then he loves less, because the effects of his past sins leave a cloud between his soul and God. This cloud can only be removed by reparation and atonement made in a suitable way. Blessed they who delay not to make this reparation here.

Let one or two instances show what need there often is of reparation. St. James compares a word let fall from the tongue to a spark of fire, and adds concerning this spark, *What a great wood it kindles* (c. iii.), that is, what a great conflagration may grow out of this spark. A penitent, therefore, may have spoken in presence of several persons a word of serious detraction or calumny which fills their minds with very uncharitable judgments, and that uncharitable impression may before long spread from them to others. If in such a case he merely makes his accusation in confession, "I spoke a very uncharitable word," and then receives absolution and says the prayer

given to him as a penance, has he thereby entirely undone all the bad effects of his sin?

So, too, if one speaks an angry word to another; such a word, we know, often rankles a long time and gives very great pain, and occasions much sin. In a case like this does the short penance given at confession make good all the damage done?

It is clear that our Blessed Saviour did not think so. For He requires that if when we are coming to the altar we remember that our neighbour has anything against us, we lay down our gift and go first to be reconciled with our neighbour and then come back to make our offering to God. By many of our sins we injure not only our God, but also God's image, man. As therefore God tells us plainly that he who touches any of us touches Him in the apple of His eye, it is quite evident that He cannot be properly reconciled to us unless, besides confessing our guilt to Him, we also make satisfaction to our injured neighbour. Surely then, at our confession, we greatly need a share of this wonderful grace given to Zachæus on the day of his first conversion: *If I have wronged any man of anything, I will restore four-fold*.

*If I have wronged any man*. I must go back and examine carefully and find out all whom I have wronged, and make a good reparation to each.

I have wronged God my Father by not giving Him praise, reverence, and service which I owed Him.

I have wronged my crucified Lord Jesus, and His most loving Heart, by not giving Him the gratitude and love He deserves.

I have wronged the Holy Spirit by grieving Him *Who asketh for us with unspeakable groanings* (Romans viii.).

I have wronged our Blessed Lady, who has suffered so much for me, and been so true a Mother to me.

I have wronged my good Angel, who has taken so much care of me.

I have wronged the holy and patient souls in Purgatory by forgetting and neglecting them in their sore distress, when I could so easily have given them unspeakable relief.

I have wronged my benefactors here on earth, who have been most good to me and had no return.

I have wronged many others by making salvation more difficult for them, by bad example given, by bad advice, or by occasioning sin in them, or hindering good.

In all these cases, what reparation shall I make?

Many leave this great debt to accumulate: and all through life it weighs them down, and acts as a barrier between their souls and God, compelling Him to stand aloof and not draw near in prayer as He desires to do.

2. The second great lesson taught us by Zachæus is contained in those other words of his: *Half of my goods I give to the poor.*

For, as we learn from very many passages in Holy Writ, abundant almsgiving will not only wipe out the debt left by past sins, but will also obtain for us grace to rise out of present sins, and grace too to resist future temptations to sin. The Holy Spirit dictated the word of Ecclesiasticus: *Water quenqueth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins* (c. iii.). Alms has then against sin the same power that water has against fire. That is to say, if we are as merciful as we can be and ought to be, our alms will certainly obtain for us grace to conquer sin.

#### STATION VIII.

*Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost* (vv. 9, 10).

A. *This day is salvation come to this house.* If early on that morning we had been asked to pray for this Chief of the publicans, we might have shaken our heads and said, What can prayer do for such a case? What is the use,

some one said, of praying for fine weather when the wind is quite in the wrong quarter? We are equally hopeless at times about the conversion of souls. If we had been near St. Monica when she had ended fifteen of her seventeen years of prayer for her son, we might have said to her heartlessly, as the peevish kinsmen of Tobias said to him: *Where is thy hope, for which thou givest alms, and buriedst the dead?* Or with his wife, *It is evident thy hope is come to nothing, and thy alms now appear.* Yet our Lord's promise stands firm: *Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in Heaven* (St. Matt. xviii. 19). It is true, however, that He added with regard to the youth possessed by that terrible dumb spirit which the Apostles could not cast out: *This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting* (St. Mark ix.). So that there are certain difficult cases which require prayer and penance. But if some of those countless hours that are so often wasted by Christian men and women and hang so heavily on their hands, were spent in hearty and combined prayer for some sinners, can we doubt but we should often be able to say in gladness, "Thanks to our good God, *Salvation has come this day to this house*"?

What a rich harvest of souls has been gained in this country during the last half century through the joint effort of so many communities and congregations on the Continent that were offering prayers for England! Badly wanted is the Apostleship of Prayer to rouse us not to lose hope for those whose case seems as desperate as the case of Zachæus seemed to be on the morning of his conversion; or the case of Saul when he set out on his journey to Damascus. Who can measure what the harvest would be if, with united hearts, we devoted some of the hours now wasted, to prayer for the conversion of poor sinners!

B. *For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.*



"*Attendite.*" Do not hasten on. Stay here a long time to fix well in your mind and heart this idea of our Blessed Lord's office, that He is essentially Jesus—a Saviour, Who has to earn this blessed Name, the Name above all names, by saving us from our sins. He said a similar word when once before He called a publican to Him and made him one of His Apostles, *I came not to call the just, but sinners* (St. Mark ii.).

C. Again, His Sacred Heart reveals this same secret to us when He tells us that He is the Good Shepherd Who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the desert and forsakes them till He finds the one lost, and brings it home on His shoulders; and then in gladness calls together his friends and neighbours saying, *Rejoice with Me, because I have found My sheep that was lost. I say to you, His compassionate Heart adds, I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner doing penance, more than upon ninety-nine just* (St. Luke xv.).

D. The same most necessary truth He again impresses upon us when He surpasses all human eloquence in His parable, to tell us how He looks out for the prodigal when He is afar off, and runs to meet him, and falls on his neck (*ibid.*).

I say "this most necessary truth," because Satan knows well that salvation is sure so long as hope in the infinite mercy and compassion of God our Father and God our Redeemer endures, and he therefore labours incessantly to prove to each of us that our case is exceptionally bad; that God is indeed very good, but that we have so often resisted His graces that we must have tired out His mercy. But when we go round and find that Satan has whispered that same lie into a thousand times ten thousand other souls, what becomes of God's goodness and mercy if we are to give ear to this slander and blasphemy? How is God to be our infinitely compassionate Father, if His mercy only reaches certain good children and has no pity for all of us poor sinners?

What became afterwards of Zachæus? Some writers have imagined that he was the St. Matthias afterwards elected as the substitute for Judas; but this supposition clashes with Acts i. 21, 22. The Apostles were to choose one who had *compared with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us*. There is more authority for the account which was formerly read in the Breviary of Tulle, in France, on September 3rd, that—according to an ancient tradition supported by innumerable testimonies and still more by a Bull of Pope Martin V. dated 1427—Zachæus emigrated to France, to a wild spot still called Roc Amadour, in the diocese of Cahors; and that there he is honoured under the name of St. Amadour or Amator, a name which, we may assume, he adopted to signify his love for our Lord. Another tradition tells us that he was the husband of Veronica.

## SCENE IV.

### JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

*As they were hearing these things, He added and spoke a parable because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately be manifested* (St. Luke xix. 11).

He is come out from the house of Zachæus, on the morning, probably, of Wednesday in Passion Week, and speaks this parable, before starting, to the great crowd gathered round Him.

Jericho is in a state of excitement. The news that Jesus is going to Jerusalem is spread abroad. The people, knowing the deadly hatred of the Rulers there against Him, feel sure that some important crisis is near. Jesus, the great Prophet, is, no doubt, going to strike a decisive blow, to liberate the people from the Roman yoke and restore the ancient theocracy. Jesus sees around Him the palace and the other splendid buildings raised about the time of His Birth by Herod and by Archelaus. Some commentators think that the story of Archelaus suggested the parable that follows. In one point his history does bear a resemblance to the parable, but in others it is as wide of it as it well can be. Archelaus, as we remember, was reigning in Judea when our Saviour was brought back from Egypt; and for this reason Joseph would not go to Judea, but went to Galilee. Why this preference of Galilee? If he feared Archelaus because he was a son of Herod, was not another son, Herod Antipas, reigning in Galilee? The reason may be that Archelaus was known to be an unscrupulous and bloodthirsty tyrant. He had been brought up at Rome at the Court of Caesar. For the Romans were glad to have the sons of tributary princes with

them as hostages and security for good conduct. Archelaus then obtained from the Emperor a part of his father's kingdom, in which he was to be Tetrarch. Judea was his portion. During his short reign he distinguished himself by rapacity, extravagance and cruelty. Any one who wanted either justice or mercy had to pay a high price for it. To build his grand palace at Jericho and a house called by his own name, he destroyed existing towns; and to revenge himself on some who had opposed in Rome his petition for sovereignty, he massacred three thousand of his subjects. The people of Judea could not endure his tyranny and appealed to Augustus Caesar, begging to be made a Roman province. Archelaus was summoned to Rome. The messenger, who bore his own name, found him, Josephus tells us, feasting sumptuously. He had to obey at once the Emperor's mandate; and when he arrived at Rome, was deposed and banished, a complete pauper, to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. The one point of resemblance between his story and the parable which our Saviour is about to utter, is that the people of Judea did not want Archelaus to reign over them.

The object, then, of our Saviour in His parable is to teach His disciples, (1) that the time for His entering into His Kingdom is not come yet; that they, during the interval, will have to be faithful and prudent servants; and (2) that those who refuse Him as their King will be terribly chastised.

#### STATION I.

*A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; and calling his ten servants he gave them ten pounds, and said to them: Trade till I come (vv. 12, 13).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, is, during this present life, in a certain sense, absent from His earthly home: waiting for the time when He is to enter into full possession of His Kingdom, the time of which St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *Afterwards the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God and the Father, when He shall have brought to nought all principality, and power, and virtue*—that is, the devils who had fallen from the different heavenly choirs. *For He must reign until He hath put all His enemies*

*under His feet. And the enemy, death, shall be destroyed last. For He hath put all things under His feet* (1 Cor. xv.).

On Calvary Christ conquered Satan and sin; and by His Resurrection the last enemy, death.

B. Meanwhile, He sets each of us over some little part of His possessions, with the condition that if faithful over a few things He will place us over many. He gives each of us a pound (*mina*, which the learned calculate to have been worth between three and four pounds of our money). The pound means our mental faculties—will, understanding, memory; also our bodily senses—eyes, ears, and tongue; also our time, our money, our health; then, besides, our spiritual helps—sacraments, instructions, Holy Mass, prayer, etc.

Let us stay a little while to examine whether we are faithful and prudent stewards over our Master's goods.

#### STATION II.

*But his citizens hated him, and they sent an embassy after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us* (v. 14).

A. Here we have in few words the history of the war between Lucifer and Christ. Lucifer persuades his dupes—the men who make up what is called the world—that they have their heaven here. Their creed and gospel is: *Come let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.). Christ, on the contrary, teaches His followers an opposite Gospel. Do not with Dives try to have your heaven here. Use the creatures here as much as they help you to your home in Heaven; but if they are a hindrance to your salvation, away with them. *If thy right eye scandalise thee, pluck it out* (St. Matt. v.). Satan's dupes, the men of this world, hate and abhor this doctrine and persecute all who hold it. Why so? Why cannot they enjoy present things themselves and let others practise self-denial? Because they feel in their hearts and proclaim it aloud: *Christ is become a*

*censurer of our thoughts ! We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness. Let us see if His words be true. He calleth Himself the Son of God. Let us examine Him by outrages (Wisdom ii.). This is the secret of all the cruelty and malice which the men of the world have poured out on our Lord and His martyrs and His Church in all ages—our own days included.*

B. Remember this word : *We will not have this man to reign over us. "Attendie."* Stay here and examine carefully on what side we stand : with Christ ? or with the world and Lucifer ? With our lips we often say to our Lord : *Thy Kingdom come ; Thy will be done.* But what do our deeds say ? Our Lord's complaint against the Pharisees was : *They say and do not* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

### STATION III.

*And it came to pass that he returned, having received the kingdom. And he commanded the servants to be called to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading* (v. 15).

A. St. Ignatius begins the Exercises with this fundamental truth : "Man was created to praise God our Lord ; to reverence Him ; and to serve Him ; and by so doing to save his own soul". *This is all man* (Eccles. xii.). Life, and every day of life, is to be made up of *praise to God, reverence and service.* This is our way of trading. By this trading we win our happy eternity.

*By so doing, to save his own soul.* He who praises, reverences, and serves his God with fidelity and diligence gains a higher place near God for eternity. He who is remiss has a lower place.

### STATION IV.

*And the first came, saying : Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said to him : Well done, thou good servant ; because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities* (vv. 16, 17).

A. Observe that this faithful and diligent servant does not take the credit to himself. He humbly says : *Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds.* This is also the language of St. Paul, who was so faithful a servant. *I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am : and His grace in me hath not been made void : but I have laboured more abundantly than all they : yet not I, but the grace of God with me* (1 Cor. xv.).

B. A faithful and diligent servant of this kind trades with great industry, uses time and his other gifts so prudently and diligently, that sometimes, *made perfect in a short space, he hath filled up many long years* (Wisdom iv.), and by a spotless life is entitled to all the honour and reward due to venerable old age. St. Alphonsus Liguori bound himself by vow not to waste any time. He had before his mind the words of our Divine Master, *Trade till I come.* We marvel at this bold vow. No wise confessor would like to allow even a fervent penitent to take such a vow. Yet who is really the prodigy ? The Saint so diligent, or we so idle ?

Traders of this world and successful physicians are very chary of their time, and add on hour after hour to their working-day, in order to lay up gold and silver. And we, each moment, can earn fresh graces and a higher Heaven, more union with God and a more burning love for the Three Divine Persons through all eternity. Very soon, in the middle of the night, we shall hear the word : *Thou canst be steward no longer.* Come now and give an account of thy stewardship (St. Luke xvii.). From that moment our working-day is over. The night is come in

which no man can work (St. John ix.). Our day of privilege is at an end. We can earn no more, either in Purgatory or in Heaven. It is written of the tree, *In what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be* (Eccles. xi.). One truth contained in that text is that at the moment of death we have determined for ever our place in Heaven, and what degree of love for our God we are to have during the endless eternity; we cannot now add any more to the store we have brought with us from this world where we had every day such abundant opportunities. Here during every hour, nay, every minute, thanks to the plentiful redemption of Christ, the faithful servant can trade and add to his gains.

C. One of the readiest and most effective ways of multiplying our gains is by almsgiving and works of mercy. *He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay him* (Prov. xix.), and richly. But works of mercy and alms have value according as they cost us. If I give alms out of my superfluities, this is good, but only copper alms. If I give alms, as theologians say, *de conveniente*, that is, out of money which is neither superfluous nor yet strictly necessary, but still very useful to me, this is silver alms. If I give out of my necessity, this is golden alms. If I go further, and give my bodily labour, earnest prayer, penance, and fasting and tears for some soul, I am giving diamonds and precious jewels.

#### STATION V.

*And the second came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he saith to him, Be thou over five cities* (vv. 18, 19).

##### A. Thy pound hath gained five pounds.

This servant, too, speaks with humble modesty, "It is not I, Lord, but Thy grace that has won the increase".

##### B. Be thou over five cities. Our Good Master does not

reproach him and taunt him for not having earned ten pounds, as the other had done, but rewards him.

At the Judgment, the unfortunate sinner will be overwhelmed when he hears his sentence; but will not the child of God be also utterly crushed and overwhelmed when he finds out with what an infinite gratitude our Lord blesses and rewards him for his small doings here below on earth?

C. We ought to make out for ourselves a copious list of all the ways in which we can trade advantageously. I can gain by lending a good book, by helping to spread good books, by helping to have a good book printed. I thus leave behind me, when I am laid in my grave, a faithful agent that will continue to do good and gain for me.

Whenever I hear Mass I can traffic to great advantage, for then our Lord adds His passion to my prayers. And we must bear in mind that if we offer Mass, or have Mass offered for others, it is a larger charity to offer it for many than for one. Eminent theologians hold that each one of the many gets the full benefit of the Holy Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The larger our hearts are, and the wider the reach of our desires, the more they resemble the yearnings of our Lord.

Again, every act of self-denial gains for me. But if I do the act of self-denial or say a prayer for some other soul, I double my gains by adding almsdeeds to my self-denial.

Again, by night and by day, I can traffic wonderfully by desires for the holy souls or the conversion of sinners. God has in His mercy put the dead as well as the living

<sup>1</sup> If a priest receives a stipend, he is bound to intend that the soul on whose behalf this stipend is offered shall get all the good that it is entitled to from the Holy Sacrifice. But the eminent theologian, Father Ballerin, S.J., gives it as the *probabiliorum et communiorum sententiam*, that if a Mass be offered for ten persons, *debitum fructum unusquisque totum e singulis decem Missis percipiet*; that is, he teaches as the more probable and the most common opinion among theologians that if a Mass be offered for ten persons, each of the ten gets the whole value of the Mass. He adds as a corollary, that if a devout person is having ten Masses said, one for each of ten different souls among the living or the dead, these ten souls would benefit much more in the end if each Mass was offered for all the ten souls (Ballerin's Gury, *De Euchar.* n. 356, note 6).

within my reach, in order that I may have plenty of opportunities of trading advantageously by almsgiving.

I can also trade largely by praying that the good works of others may be blessed and may succeed. By so doing, I become their partner.

#### STATION VI.

*And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man. Thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest that which thou didst not sow (vv. 20, 21).*

*A. I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.*

This slothful and useless servant ought, at least, St. Jerome writes, to have acknowledged his fault and begged pardon. But on the contrary, he slanders his master to justify himself. So did our first father Adam. *The woman whom Thou gavest to me to be my companion, gave me of the tree and I did eat (Genesis iii.).* We inherit this bad spirit. It is the father or the mother, we say, whom God gave me, that makes me sin. It is the temper that God has given me. It is my poverty, it is my surroundings, which are all God's appointment, that causes my ruin. But when grace grows, we say, on the contrary, with the good thief, I deserve well all that has come upon me; but this Man, Jesus, my Lord and my God, *has done no evil.*

B. The man who does not trade, who gains no increase at all, loses the little that he had and does not save his soul. He has not won his place in Heaven. He has not striven by good works to make his *calling and election sure* (2 St. Peter i.). He had one work to do in this world, "one thing necessary," and he has not done it. *So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: and have been able to show no mark of virtue; but are consumed in our wickedness. Such things as these the sinners said in Hell (Wisdom v.).*

#### STATION VII.

*He saith to him: Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow. And why then didst thou not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have exacted it with usury? (vv. 22, 23).*

*A. Thou wicked servant.*

God, besides being our Father, is our God, our Creator, and our absolute Master.

*Arise, He said to Jeremias, and go down into the potter's house. And I went down into the potter's house: and behold he was making of clay with his hands: and turning he made another vessel, as it seemed good in his eyes to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Cannot I do with you, as this potter, O house of Israel, saith the Lord? Behold as clay in the hands of the potter, so are you in My hand (Jerem. xviii.).*

We have not only to love and praise God as children, we have also to fear Him, and to reverence Him as our Supreme Lord and Master, and to be His servants.

*The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm cx.).* St. Ignatius makes us meditate on Hell with this object, that if the spirit of love, through our venial sins, in great measure dies out within our souls, a wise fear at least may save us from committing mortal sin. Holy Job tells us that he could never from childhood be hard or unjust to the poor. Why? Because *I always feared God as waves swelling over me, and His weight I was not able to bear (c. xxxi.).*

Therefore this slothful servant, if he had such a dark picture of God's severity before his mind, ought through fear at least to have bestirred himself.

B. Still it is much easier to serve our God when we can look on Him as a Father. Fear is only the beginning of wisdom, but we must not stop at this beginning. *Think of the Lord in goodness (Wisdom i.).* Even to the hard-

hearted Jews He says: *Therefore at the least from this time call to Me, Thou art my Father* (Jerem. iii.). And the one prayer bequeathed to us by our Blessed Saviour teaches us always to call God our Father.

#### STATION VIII.

*And he saith to them that stood by: Take the pound away from him, and give it to him that hath the ten pounds. And they say to him: Lord, he hath ten pounds. But I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him* (vv. 24—26).

A. The pound not utilised by one is taken away from him and given to one who will traffic well. As the rain and the snow, the Lord says, *come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it* (Isaiah lv.). That is to say, graces sent down from Heaven shall not be wasted, but shall do God's work and prosper; because the goodness of our God offers the grace rejected by one to some one else more wise. When one of the forty martyrs apostatised, one of the guards came forward to take his place. When St. Francis of Assisi saw many of his first followers falling away he was alarmed lest his Order should die out; but our Lord comforted him, saying, "If one falls off, I will provide another". When Judas lost his place, it was not left vacant. *His bishopric let another take* (Psalm cxviii.). Observe the warning word that Mardochoai sent to his cherished ward, Queen Esther, when she was too terrified to venture into the presence of the great Emperor Assuerus to plead for her doomed people: *If thou wilt now hold thy peace, the Jews shall be delivered by some other occasion: and thou, and thy father's house shall perish* (Esther iv.).

Hence our Lord's admonition to the Bishop of the Church of Philadelphia, *Behold I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown* (Apoc. iii.).

B. *To every one that hath shall be given.* It is easy for a man who has much money to make more. So many chances occur of good bargains, and he can profit by those occasions. So it is with grace. When a man has much, and knows the value of grace, and is hungry for more, our good God is always glad to throw in his way chances of increasing his store.

C. *And from him that hath not, that which he hath shall be taken away.* That is, a man who, through his own fault, has very little grace, not enough for his circumstances and wants, is very weak when temptation comes, and loses the little that he has. Therefore did our Lord say so earnestly: *Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation—the flesh is weak.*

#### STATION IX.

*But as for those my enemies who would not have me reign over them: bring them hither and kill them before me* (v. 27).

A. So far our Lord has been teaching. His disciples to be faithful stewards; now He adds one short terrible word about His enemies who reject Him, those most wicked men to whom He intends to say very soon: *You shut the Kingdom of Heaven: for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

*Bring them hither and kill them before me.* Would that this were all! But our Blessed Saviour sees beyond the grave. He hears these most miserable victims of Satan's malice and craft, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth, and howling out in anguish their fruitless moan: *The serpent deceived me.*

*And having said these things, He went before, going up to Jerusalem* (St. Luke xiii.). The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem is about twenty-five miles, but the road is so hilly that the walk must have been as fatiguing as if they had to walk forty miles.

Jericho stood, as has been said, in the plain that separates the Judean mountains from the southern part of the Jordan, and from the Dead Sea.

As our Lord walked out of Jericho towards Jerusalem He had straight before Him the Mountain of Temptation, or the Quarantine, as it is called. There in a grotto He had fasted forty days, and had permitted Satan to come to tempt Him. After walking about a mile across the plain and leaving the Mount of Temptation on the right hand He commenced the steep ascent. For Jerusalem stands between two and three thousand feet above Jericho, and therefore it may be, as well as because Jerusalem was the capital, that we read in the Gospel that the man who fell among thieves *went down from Jerusalem to Jericho*. The story of the Good Samaritan may not have been a parable, but a true narrative of what had occurred. For it would be difficult to imagine a region more fit to be the haunt of robbers than the country on each side of this wild and dreary road. Our Saviour and His followers had not to climb one continuous ascent, but to walk up and down a succession of rocky hills, abounding everywhere with caverns or grottoes out of which, even now, the Bedouins spring, upon the unprotected traveller and leave him on the road stripped of all that they can take; and wounded also to death if he offers any resistance. For this reason pilgrims secure the service of one of the armed Bedouins who have entered the service of the Government as mounted police. These Bedouin gendarmes are respected by their lawless comrades, who are often met on the road carrying their rifle slung over their shoulder and a massive club in their hand. At the present day, with the exception of the khan or resting-house where pilgrims dismount to eat whatever food they bring with them (for they will find no entertainment there), there is scarcely a house to be seen from the time the traveller leaves the site of ancient Jericho till he arrives in the neighbourhood of Bethany. The journey not a little resembles the ride through Connemara, with this exception, that whereas in Ireland there is a good carriage road, from Jericho up to the Holy City there is none. A late enterprising Pacha of Jerusalem began to make a good road, but he was removed from his office, and it remains unfinished and useless, the necessary bridges not being erected, and the road being in parts so steep that it seems very doubtful whether carriages could be dragged up the heights. The spot is still pointed out where the Good Samaritan did his charitable work; and there is also seen by the roadside a small erection called the Well of the Apostles.

## STARRON X.

*He went before, going up to Jerusalem (St. Luke v. 28).*

A. Contemplate the scene: the *persons*, the *words*, the *actions*. Watch our Blessed Lord walking on before, in His eagerness for the moment that is coming; yet now, as always, full of consideration for the faithful crowd that follows; and therefore not hastening on too fast for them. When He travelled along this road a fortnight before to raise Lazarus to life, He accomplished the journey from the Jordan to Bethany in two days. Now that He has a much larger crowd around Him, and many devout women, and probably too His Holy Mother, we may perhaps assume that He was best part of three days on the road.

B. Observe closely the poverty of our Lord and our Lady on this journey, and how He trains His followers to labour and to the endurance of hunger.

Mary and Martha and others were no doubt there to minister to Him and to Holy Mary and to the Apostles; but their money could only procure in that wilderness very scant refreshment after the weary walking. We must also take notice that the poverty of Jesus and His Blessed Mother is not only outward poverty, but inwardly also there is the most perfect poverty of spirit: a strong and unalterable desire and preference and love for this severe poverty. Twelve legions of angels are ready to minister to their King and their Queen, but the delight of their King and their Queen is in poverty. By their poverty they know that they will conquer the world with its concupiscences.

C. What are the thoughts of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, as they go back to their home at Bethany? Of what is Zachæus thinking as he walks? And the men so lately blind, as they gaze on the mountains and the valleys so new to them, what is their state of mind? Are they all complaining of the weary journey? or

do they all experience what we read in the *Imitation of Christ*, that "when Jesus is present, all goes well and nothing seems difficult"?

As for the Blessed Mother, she is the Mirror of Justice. Her soul reflects the Most Holy Soul of her Son. His thoughts are her thoughts. "Blessed Mother of God:

*Vitam præsta puram,  
Iter para tutum.*

Watch over us during our journey through life, that we may arrive cleansed from all sin at our death-bed."

## SCENE V.

### JERUSALEM AND THE ENVIRONS.

#### STATION I.

*And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand. And many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Pasch to purify themselves* (St. John xi. 55).

A. May God grant us grace to learn from the stiff-necked Jews! If they purified themselves for their Pasch, what pains ought we to take to purify ourselves for our Pasch—for every Holy Communion? for the Paschal Communion? above all, for the Holy Viaticum, our last, our decisive Communion? *Wash me yet more, O Lord, from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin* (Psalm i.).

#### STATION II.

*They sought therefore for Jesus, and they discoursed one with another, standing in the Temple: What think you, that He is not come to the festival-day? And the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him* (v. 56).

A. *They sought for Jesus.*

Again we may learn from these Jews. For they were at least anxious to see our Lord and hear Him, and

they sought for Him and discussed why He had not come. We are sometimes indifferent whether He is near us or far away; and not anxious to be with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

B. *And the Priests had given a commandment that any man who knew where He was should tell.* And therefore our Blessed Saviour is moved by His compassionate Heart to hide Himself, lest the poor people should, through fear of the Pharisees, be tempted to betray Him.

*Fac cor dulce Jesu mei, Fac ut nos amemus Te.* Grant us, O Lord, to love more and more the circumspect and compassionate charity of Thy Sacred Heart; and grace to be very careful not to give scandal to any of Thy little ones.

On the Friday then in Passion Week, we may perhaps assume, our Blessed Saviour, accompanied by a large following, has arrived at the eastern side of Mount Olivet. The Holy City lies behind the hill on the other side. He has completed the work of climbing up the rugged ascent from Jericho, and He is now on the level road which runs round the base of Mount Olivet into Jerusalem. Bethany and the grave of Lazarus lie on the hill-side before Him, and He has reached the Stone of Conference, where a fortnight before He spoke with Martha, and then with Magdalen. May we not picture to ourselves Magdalen pointing out the stone to our Blessed Lady, and lingering there with her a while, and Martha too, repeating to the Blessed Mother the memorable words there said to her: *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believeth in Me, even though he be dead, shall live?* These words, with so many others, Holy Mary lays up in her heart, never to lose them.

We may likewise try to read the thoughts of Lazarus when Martha brings him also to the stone. The Apostles point it out to many more.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, pilgrims from many lands are crowding into Jerusalem, through all the gates of the city, for the Great Pasch. Little they know how great a Pasch it is to be. Some of these pilgrims have fallen in with the disciples following Jesus from Jericho, and have heard something of what has passed. They carry the tidings into Jerusalem that Jesus of Nazareth is close at hand, that He has reached Bethany and is staying there. They further report that Lazarus is with Him. The news spreads rapidly through the city, and soon arrives at the villa of the High Priest on the Hill of Evil Counsel. The effect produced by the news is very different in different quarters.



## SCENE VI.

BETHANY.

STATION I.

*A great multitude of the Jews knew that He was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus (St. John xii. 9).*

A. On the Friday evening, therefore,<sup>1</sup> and on the Sabbath day that follows, the road from Jerusalem to Bethany is crowded with men and women hastening to see Jesus; and with others, perchance still more eager to look on Lazarus, the man who was dead and is come to life.

Let us contemplate, in the first place, those among the crowd of visitors who are desirous of seeing Jesus. Many among them have a true affection for Him. As we watch them thronging round Him as they have been used to do, and with gladness on their faces gazing upon Him, and trying, perhaps, to touch the hem of His garments, we will pray that we may have some share of their affection for our Saviour, some of their desire to see Him and be near Him. In that very favourite hymn of Holy Church, the *Ave Maris Stella*, we are taught to pray to the Blessed Mother of God:

Vitam præsta puram,	Keep us pure till life be done:
Iter para tutum,	Pray that safe our course we run:
Ut videntes Jesum,	Then shall we behold thy Son,
Semper collatamur.	And be glad for ever.

B. Then, in the next place, as we watch the men and women eagerly thronging round Lazarus and looking in joyful wonder upon him, *Sussum corda*. We may lift up our hearts and see the blessed angels and saints gazing with a joy such as no eye on earth has seen on the poor sinner when he has come home to his Heavenly Father,

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passch came to Bethania (St. John xii.) (see page 884).*

*For he was dead and is come to life (St. Luke xv.). Believe firmly these words of our Lord: So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God on one sinner doing penance (St. Luke xv.). And if joy among the blessed angels, infinitely greater joy to our Heavenly Father Who created the sinner to His likeness, to be His child; infinitely greater also to the Heart of our Blessed Saviour Who sought after him and ransomed him and brought him back.*

*The Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy. He will not always be angry, nor will He threaten for ever.—As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us (Psalm cii.). Blessed the day, thrice blessed the hour, when by holy absolution we were raised from death to life for the last time, never to fall again. And if the sinner's coming home gives such gladness to God and to His angels and saints, what is their gratitude to him who helps to bring the prodigal home! Let us resolve with our Lord: I will seek that which was lost; and that which was driven away I will bring again; and I will strengthen that which was weak (Ezech. xxxiv.).*

C. At the same time it is better to be anxious to see and know Jesus than to see the man raised to life by miracle, or cured by miracle.

"Many run," Thomas à Kempis writes in one of his admirable chapters on the Blessed Sacrament, "many run to different places to visit the relics of the Saints, and they are astonished as they listen to their deeds, and gaze on the vast structure of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones wrapped up in silk and cloth of gold. And lo! You are here present with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the Creator of men, and the Lord of angels" (Bk. iv., c. i.).

*My spirit*, Holy Mary says, *rejoiceth in God my Saviour*. As the angels surround the tabernacle they say, What have we in Heaven, Lord Jesus, better than Thee? And the faithful on earth respond, Outside Thee what is there that I desire upon the earth? (Psalm lxxii.). It is worth

knowing the Latin language in order to meditate on St. Bernard's hymn:

*Nil canitur suavius,  
Nil auditur jucundius,  
Nil cogitatur dulcius,  
Quam Jesus Dei Filius.*

*No music soothes the ear,  
No words so sweet to hear,  
No memories half so dear,  
As Jesus Son of God.*

## SCENE VII.

THE VILLA OF THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE MOUNT OF  
EVIL COUNSEL.

## STATION I.

*The Chief Priests thought to kill Lazarus also: because many  
of the Jews by reason of him went away and believed in  
Jesus (vv. 10, 11).*

The news that attracts so many of the people from Jerusalem to Bethany also reaches, as has been said, the ears of the Priests and Ancients. *Mors est malis, vita bonis*—"Death to the wicked, life to the good". Jesus, the joy of the people, is to them a horrible spectre, a nightmare ever haunting them. At once they meet and conspire against Him.

A. Look at these desecrated Priests. Listen to the foolish words of these "blind guides". *The princes have met together, against the Lord, and against His Christ, and they have devised vain things* (Psalm ii.).

Does it not occur to any of them that He Who raised Lazarus to life when he died of sickness, could also raise him again if murdered by the Rulers? Let us pray earnestly with the Psalmist: *I have cried to Thee, for Thou, O God, hast heard me. O incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my words.—From them that resist Thy right hand keep me, as the apple of Thine eye* (Psalm xvi.). O Caiphas! O Priest of God! *Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity? All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice.—Thou hast loved malice more than goodness: and iniquity rather than to speak righteousness.—Thou hast loved all the words of ruin, O deceitful tongue. Therefore will God destroy thee for ever. He will pluck thee out, and re-*

*move thee from thy dwelling-place; and thy root out of the land of the living. The just shall see and shall fear, and shall laugh at him, and say: Behold the man that made not God his helper* (Psalm li.).

May we have grace to abide always under the help of the Most High (Psalm xc.), and to say from our hearts: "Prevent, O Lord, and forestall all our actions by Thy holy inspirations, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended".

## SCENE VIII.

BETHANY. HOUSE OF SIMON.

## STATION I.

*And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the Leper, they made Him a supper there* (St. John xii.).

There seem to be, as has been said, some grounds for the opinion that Simon the Leper, who made the supper for Jesus in Bethany, was Simon the Pharisee, mentioned by St. Luke (c. vii.), who was entertaining our Saviour when the penitent woman knelt at His feet and anointed Him. On that occasion our Lord said to him: *Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee, and taught him not to let his mind dwell on Magdalen's past sins, but on her present love. Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much.* The words of Jesus may have borne good fruit. If afterwards leprosy came on, and if he was cured through the compassion of our Saviour, it is no wonder that he is now trying to show some gratitude. And if, moreover, as is thought, he was a kinsman of Magdalen and Lazarus, the resurrection of Lazarus is an additional reason for the hospitality he is offering so gladly to his Divine Master.

*And when Jesus was in Bethania.*

A. Simon, no doubt, and Lazarus and Mary and Martha constrained our Lord, as Cleophas afterwards did at Emmaus, to remain with them at Bethany before going on to Jerusalem. *Mune nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit*—"Tarry with us, dear Master, to-night, for it is late". We may humbly beg for some little share of their familiar

and intimate love for our Blessed Lord. It is not presumption, for we are commanded to love Him with our whole hearts.

B. After this we may contemplate Simon, and try to enter into all his veneration and affection for Jesus, and mark the contrast between his thoughts at the former feast in Galilee and his thoughts of this evening in Bethany. He is not now saying in his heart: *This Man if He were a Prophet, would know surely what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner* (St. Luke vii.). He is watching in silent admiration the condescension of our Saviour, and with holy envy the devotion of Magdalen.

Even so, what a change will come over our thoughts when sin is entirely cleansed away in Purgatory! He whom we now look upon as an enemy will not then look like an enemy, but only as a beautiful image of Christ Jesus, and our brother. *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, O Lord, that I may have a clean heart and judge no one, but have a kind thought and a kind word for all Thy little ones.*

## STATION II.

*And Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those that were at table with Him* (St. John xii. 2).

A. With what a full and loving heart Martha serves Jesus; and, for His sake, all the other guests! How well pleased she is that so many are there to do Him honour!

What pains she takes that every one, after the toilsome journey from Jericho, shall be well refreshed!

She is not now troubled about many things. Her one wish is that her Lord, and all dear to Him, be treated with all reverence and all love. *Let all Thy works, O Lord, praise Thee. The Lord lifteth up all that fall, and setteth up all that are cast down. The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxliv.).

O chosen, happy Saint! We are all created to serve our Lord and to serve men who are His image. Obtain for us to give our service heartily, for He loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix.).

B. *Lazarus was one of those who sat at table with Him. Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts to the Supper of the Lamb to which we are all invited and at which we all may sit with Jesus.

*Write*, said the Angel to St. John, *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Apoc. xix.). *Come, gather yourselves to the Great Supper of God* (v. 17). This is the hope laid up in our hearts, that He will raise us from the dead as He raised Lazarus, and that we shall sit at table with Him in His Eternal Home. Nay, if here we are faithful servants, this most grateful Master, so meek and humble of Heart and so loving, assures us that *He will give Himself, and make us sit down, and will minister to us* (St. Luke xii.). And the joys of this banquet and this companionship will not pass away with the evening. Time shall not bring an end to them. The thief shall never steal them away, nor any moth consume them.

Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may so pass through the changes of this changing world as not to lose the abiding good things prepared for us by Thy Son, our Lord.

## STATION III.

*Mary therefore* (having an alabaster box of precious ointment) *took a pound of ointment of right spikenard and* (breaking the alabaster box) *she poured it out upon His Head: and she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair, and the room was filled with the odour of her ointment* (St. Mark xiv.; St. John xii.).

A. Magdalen's heart is going back to the hour when Jesus raised her soul from death to life, and to the hour

when He cried out with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* "*O vos omnes, attendite.*" O all ye who pass by heedlessly, stay a little while to study her love for her Lord and His contentment in her.

Does she grudge the precious spikenard? *If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing* (Cant. viii.). All that I have, dear Lord, all that I give, is Thy creation and Thy gift to me. To Thee I give it all—all back to Thee. *In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all these things* (Paral. xxix.). Call to mind the gratitude of old Tobias and his son to St. Raphael. Tobias called to him his son, and said to him: *What can we give to the holy man, that is come with thee? Tobias answering said to his father, Father, what wages shall we give him or what can be worthy of his benefits?* (Tobias xii.).

While contemplating the grateful devotion of Magdalen, and watching how tears are running down from the eyes of Lazarus and Simon and others who love our Lord, what shall we say of ourselves, for we must in contemplation turn back upon ourselves? Alas! who is the wonder? who is the prodigy? Magdalen grateful and loving, or I cold, insensible, and selfish?

The grateful and the loving cry out in eager desire, "*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus que retribuit mihi?*" (Psalm cxv.). What shall I, what can I, give back to the Lord for all He hath given unto me? My sad prayer must be very different. *Quid retribuam?* Judging by my past heartless indifference, what am I likely to give or offer to my Lord Jesus now?

Alas! what can I do? This much at least I can do. I can again and again repeat the all-powerful cry, "Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Mother full of all grace, full of knowledge, full of maternal love for thy Divine Son, pray for us sinners who know Him not and love Him not, but wish to know Him well and to love Him much."

With us oftentimes self has the place that Jesus has in the heart of Magdalen. All good things and delightful things and precious things are for self. We want the works of the Lord, His sunshine and the stillness of the night, and the herbs and flowers that grow, all to add to our comfort and pleasure.

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Give birth to thy Son in our hearts. Let His Kingdom now come that He may reign instead of self."

All ye blessed Saints of Bethany, pray for us. All ye holy disciples of our Lord, pray for us.

#### STATION IV.

*Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was about to betray Him, said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?* (St. John xii. 4, 5).

*And the disciples seeing it had indignation* (St. Matt. xxvi. 8).

*Now there were some that had indignation within themselves* (St. Mark xiv. 4).

#### A. One of His disciples.

Judas therefore takes the lead in the murmuring; and as we are apt to follow a leader, like sheep, some of the others thoughtlessly chime in. Observe how easily bad influence spreads from soul to soul. *A little leaven corrupts the whole mass*, St. Paul says (1 Cor. v. 6). Hence so many warnings against bad companionship. *If the wolf shall at any time have fellowship with the lamb, so the sinner with the just. What fellowship hath a holy man with a dog?* (Ecclus. xiii.). *Bear not the yoke with unbelievers* (mixed marriages). *What fellowship hath light with darkness? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? Or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are*

*the temples of the living God (2 Cor. vi. 14). We wonder at the severity of the law imposed on the Israelites: Of those cities that shall be given to thee thou shalt suffer none at all to live, not even women and children, but shall kill them with the edge of the sword. But the reason is given, Lest they teach you to do all their abominations which they have done to their gods and you should rise against the Lord your God (Deut. xx.). God, Who knows all things, knew that the first man, and the wisest of men, and the strongest of men, and the man according to God's own heart, were all led astray by the evil influence of a sinful woman.*

## STATION V.

*Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief; and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein (St. John xii. 6).*

A. Bitter zeal is hypocrisy. It professes to be indignant in a right cause; but in reality, the anger is all for self. *The anger of man doth not work out the justice of God (St. James i.).* Reflect well on the truth of St. Paul's words: *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest (Romans ii.).* Judas is angry, so he says, because the poor are neglected; and all the while he is a thief who has been stealing the alms given to the poor. It is said that he had always stolen for himself a tenth of all entrusted to him for the poor. All the terrible curses of the 108th Psalm are poured out upon him, because *he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar. When he is judged, may he go out condemned. He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him.*

B. Observe, too, that it is not now that he begins to be wicked. No one as a rule becomes very good or very wicked all of a sudden. He has long been sinning in secret against the poor. Therefore our Lord had said as far back as the

*day of the loaves and fishes: Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil (St. John vi.).*

Grant us grace, O Lord, to advance from virtue to virtue. Cleanse us yet more from venial sins, that we may never commit grievous sins.

## STATION VI.

*Jesus therefore said, Let her alone; why do you trouble this woman? For she had wrought a good work in Me. For the poor you have always with you, but Me you have not always (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

A. *Let her alone.* This rebuke was gall and wormwood to the proud heart of Judas. In addition to his pitiless avarice, he has now a heart full of bitter malice and revenge against our Lord, and he determines to regain by selling his Master what he had lost by the loving profusion of Magdalen. Wickedness grows and develops rapidly, as a fire does, if we do not make haste to put out the first spark.

B. *Why do you trouble this woman? she hath wrought a good work in Me.* There are many who profess to approve of alms to the poor, but condemn as waste alms given directly to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. This kind of philanthropy is not the spirit of almsgiving which Christ teaches. His promise is that He will value alms to the poor *as if done to Himself*; but not as something better than alms to Himself. That is to say, out of His excessive charity and because He loves men so much, He will raise up and extol and exaggerate the value of alms to the poor and set them on a level with alms done directly to Himself. So that, if we give clothes and food to His poor, He will value that act of charity as much as if we gave an alms to Himself in person; as for instance, an altar on which He may offer His Sacrifice, a tabernacle to dwell in, bread and wine and oil for His Sacred

Mysteries. But He never said, nor ever could say, that alms to the poor are better than alms given to Himself. Philanthropists who laud alms to the poor, and condemn as waste alms given immediately to Jesus Christ, in reality destroy all the beauty and the sacred character of almsgiving to the poor. For the real dignity and worth of the poor is that they represent Christ Jesus, and are His image and His proxy. Let those who consider money wasted that is given directly to Jesus Christ for His altar, and those, too, who consider their children wasted and lost if they are consecrated to God, read the word spoken to us by our Lord, through Aggeus His Prophet, when the Jews, now come back from captivity, were building homes for themselves and not thinking of a house for the Lord: *Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house (My house) lie desolate? Set your hearts to consider your ways: you have sowed much and brought in little, you have eaten but have not had enough. You have drunk but have not been filled with drink. You have clothed your selves but have not been warmed, and he that earned wages put them into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Set your hearts upon your ways, go up to the mountains, bring timber, and build the house (of God), and it shall be acceptable to Me, and I shall be glorified, saith the Lord. You have looked for more, and behold it became less. You have brought it home, and behold, I have blowed it away. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because My house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house. Therefore the heavens over you were stayed from giving dew, and the earth was hindered from yielding her fruits. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the vine, and upon the oil, and upon all that the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon beasts, and upon all the labour of the hands (Aggeus i.).* In other words, God says to us: Give to Me, and I give to you. Be niggardly with Me, and I will cease to bless you.

## STATION VII.

*She, in pouring this ointment upon My Body, hath done it for My burial (St. Matt. xxvi. 12). What she had, she hath done. She is come beforehand to anoint My Body for the burial (St. Mark xiv. 8).*

A. This does not mean that Magdalen was aware that the Death of her loved Master was so near and was preparing for the burial; but only that He accepted her pious work for His burial; and that His Heart, fore-knowing that it was well timed for His burial, gave to hers the inspiration to do this act of charity.

St. John's version is a little different: *Let her alone, that she may keep it for the day of My burial.* From these words we are inclined to think that some of Magdalen's precious spoken word was kept for the burial. This would be a consoling interpretation, but the commentators explain the words to mean: "Let her alone, for hereafter she will have the comfort of knowing that what she has done to-day was a preparation for My burial". The Greek text points to this interpretation.

What consolation these words must, in after years, have given to Magdalen!

How blessed are they who follow good inspirations from Heaven! We hear sometimes the news: He died quite suddenly last evening without the sacraments, but he had been to Confession and Communion in the morning. How consoling for a priest when he can say: "The patient I was attending died very unexpectedly yesterday, when all thought that he was mending; but luckily I had gone in an hour before, and, though I saw no danger, I heard his confession and absolved him!" A few years ago a well-known man died during the night. The doctor had said when going away: "There is no danger to-night, you can all go to bed". But his good old mother sat by him and said next morning: "How glad I am that I did

not go away! I was saying the Litany for him when he was born, and I was saying the Rosary for him when he died."

B. *She hath done it for My burial.* We know how our Blessed Saviour appeared to St. Martin of Tours, and to St. Peter, the tax-collector, wearing the cloaks they had given to the poor, and saying: "This is the cloak Martin gave to Me. This is the mantle Peter gave Me." Therefore, if we help to bury a poor man or to take care of his bereaved orphans, our Lord will be grateful as if we had devoutly taken part in His burial.

#### STATION VIII.

*Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her (St. Matt. xxvi. 13).*

*O you who go by the way, pause here a little while, or rather a long time, to contemplate the gratitude of our Lord's Sacred Heart. What Magdalen has done is to be recorded by the inspired Evangelists alongside the story of His own Life and Death, and to be remembered until the consummation of the world. All the Church of the saints shall declare (her) alms (Ecclus. xxxi.). And when all is over in this world—both the holy deeds of men and their sins—the gratitude of our Saviour's Heart will not die, but be fresh for ever: The just shall be in everlasting remembrance (Psalm cxi.). For ever, and for ever, Magdalen will be made aware, in a thousand ways, that the Sacred Heart of her Master is still saying: She did it for My burial.*

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### PALM SUNDAY TO HOLY THURSDAY.

#### SCENE I.

##### FROM BETHANY TO JERUSALEM.

BETHANY, as we have seen, was on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, not far from the base. From thence our Blessed Saviour had a choice of two ways to Jerusalem.

One by the high-road round the base of the hill. This road runs southward for a short distance, and then turning round Mount Olivet enters into the valley of the Cedron and runs northward along the eastern wall of the city, passing the Garden of Gethsemani.

The other and shorter route lay over Mount Olivet. Certain modern English writers maintain that we have no means of ascertaining which road our Saviour chose on the Palm Sunday.

But with regard to this triumphal procession of our Lord, one thing is certain from the Gospel, that it passed through Bethphage. If the site of Bethphage can be ascertained, the question is settled. These English writers, because no traces remain above ground of the little town, conclude at once that it is impossible to fix its site. The Franciscan Fathers, on the other hand, who have been for six centuries the Guardians of the Holy Places, consider that there is no doubt about the site of Bethphage, and all except a few English and American writers side with the Franciscan Fathers.

In ascertaining the position of ancient Bethphage the Franciscans followed the same method which they had found to be so successful in other parts of Palestine. They began by inquiring diligently among the Arab inhabitants whether there was any tradition among them as to this site. They found that the Arabs had no doubt as to the spot where the town stood. Quite recently, a traveller told his guide to ask an Arab whom he met by chance on Mount Olivet whereabouts was the town of Bethphage. He pointed at once unhesitatingly to the spot which is commonly believed to be the true site. The Franciscan Fathers after a long experience have learned to place great reliance on

the fidelity of tradition among the Arabs, and by excavating have been able to furnish most wonderful proofs of the correctness of their traditions.

They acted thus at Bethphage. On the slope of Mount Olivet, about midway between Bethany and the top of the hill, they purchased a small plot of ground on the site where the Arabs placed Bethphage. On the surface there was nothing at all to justify this expenditure. But when they excavated they came on two very consoling witnesses. In the first place they uncovered a block of stone between three and four feet in height and about the same in length and breadth. When the earth was all cleared away from this block they were able to discern ancient paintings on its sides. These paintings are still to be seen. The Fathers have built a small house on the spot, so that the stone and the paintings are now under cover. One of these paintings represents the ass being brought to our Saviour. Another, the raising of Lazarus.

On clearing away the ground still further, the indefatigable Franciscan Fathers and Brothers uncovered the foundation of a small church; one of the many, it is supposed, with which St. Helen did honour to the Holy Places. We may therefore, safely trust the Arab tradition, and take for granted that Bethphage stood higher up on Mount Olivet than Bethany. This being so, it is quite clear that our Lord on Palm Sunday went by the shorter route over the hill to Jerusalem. This conclusion is, I think, rendered certain by the words in St. Luke xix.: *When He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet. Near the descent, would be when He had reached the top, and was about to descend.*

A further question arises here as to the time of this triumphal entry of our Lord. St. Matthew tells the story of this procession in his 21st chapter, and does not speak of the supper at Bethany till the 26th chapter. St. Mark follows the same order. He records the entry into Jerusalem in his 11th chapter, and the supper in Simon's house, in the 14th. If we had nothing but these two Gospels to guide us, we should not dare to place this entry of our Lord after the supper; but in St. John's Gospel we find these two incidents in reversed order: the supper first, and the entry on the day after. St. John on this point is very precise and clear. Immediately after his account of the supper, he writes, *On the next day a great multitude took branches of palm trees, etc.* Commentators without hesitation adopt this chronology of St. John, first because he wrote much later than the other Evangelists, and one of his objects was to clear up points left unsettled by them; and secondly, because they have ascertained by careful study that St. Matthew and St. Mark, in many parts of their narrative, do not propose to arrange events in chronological order, but merely to leave on record some of our Lord's remarkable sayings or doings.

St. John then gives us two dates not given by the other

Evangelists. He tells us, first, that our Lord arrived at Bethania six days before the Passh (St. John xii.). This might mean on the Friday or Saturday of Passion Week. For the six days might be counted either from Good Friday, or Holy Thursday; since though the Paschal supper was held on the Thursday night, yet the following day could be, as we have seen elsewhere, called the day of the Pasch.

Then, secondly, St. John also tells us that our Lord's entry took place the day after the supper—on the next day (St. John xii.).

The order then appears to be that our Saviour arrived from Jericho on Friday, that the supper at Simon's house took place on Saturday, and the procession to Jerusalem on our Palm Sunday.

#### STATION I.

*And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her (on which no man yet hath sitten), loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. And the disciples going did as Jesus commanded them. And they found the colt tied before the gate in the meeting of two ways. And as they were loosing the colt, the owner thereof said, Why loose you the colt? But they said, Because the Lord hath need of him, and they brought him to Jesus (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.; St. Luke xix.).*

*A. Say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go.*

So, by rights, it should always be. As soon as I hear that the Lord hath need of anything that He has given to me, at once I ought to let it go. For the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord (Job i.). Is not He thy Father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee? (Deut. xxxii.). But, alas! O my God, to Thee only have I sinned (Psalm l.). If a great man on this earth asks, I am in a hurry to give. If Thou ask, I am slow.



B. To the Jews God, using our human language, expressed by the mouth of Jeremias His holy envy of Jonadab, because he was revered and obeyed by his children. Go, He said to Jeremias, to the house of the Rechabites and speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers of the treasures, and thou shalt give them wine to drink. And I brought them into the house of the Lord, and I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine and cups, and I said to them, Drink ye wine. And they answered, We will not drink wine, because Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, You shall drink no wine, neither you nor your children for ever. . . . And the word of the Lord came to Jeremias, saying: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and say to the men of Judah, Will you not receive instruction to obey My words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, by which he commanded his sons not to drink wine, have prevailed, and they have drunk none to this day, because they obeyed the commandment of their father: but I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me. And I have sent to you all My servants, the Prophets, rising early and sending. . . . and you have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened to Me (Jerem. xxxv.).

Has not our Lord a similar reproach to make against us now from His tabernacle? "To the man of Bethphage My messengers had only to say, *The Master hath need of them, and he will let them go*; but if I send My messengers to you, to say that I have need of help from you, am I sure that you will give it? O My people, in what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me" (Micah vi.).

C. *The Master hath need of them.* Observe the poverty of our Blessed Saviour. In this day of modest triumph, He has nothing but what men choose to lend, or give to Him. And now in our days He is quite as poor as then. Here on earth man is rich, God is poor. *The Heavens of Heavens is the Lord's; but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). It is as when a good father makes over a property to his eldest son. He has given it, and

will not take it back. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent* (Psalm cix.). Therefore in this world man is master, and our Lord is poor, and quite dependent. If He wants bread for His poor, He comes to us for it. If He wants instruction for His little ones, He comes to us. Even when He wants to offer the Everlasting Sacrifice for men, He cannot do it till we give Him the juice of the grape, and the wheaten bread, and provide an altar, and the priest, and the vestments. If He wants to soothe the soul of the dying, He cannot carry out His loving wish till we give Him as an alms the oil of olives which is to be to the dying man the oil of peace and gladness.

Oh, how humble of Heart our Blessed Lord is when He stoops so low as to tell me that He hath need of me! We often say, "I do not choose to be under obligation to this man". Our Lord and our God wishes most ardently to be under obligation to each of us, that thus He may have a plea for pouring out all His riches on us throughout eternity.

Being Himself Charity, He cannot but love charity, and cannot help desiring that we His children be like to Him in charity. Therefore, this law He has firmly established, *Give and it shall be given to you*. And in order to induce us to give willingly and lovingly, even as He gives to us, He makes Himself completely dependent on us, and has continually to send us this message: "The Lord hath need of you". St. Augustine in his meditations used at times to indulge in a loving day-dream, planning what he would do for God, if he were God and God were Augustine. But is this a mere day-dream? What is our actual state at present? For my little short hour on earth I am the ruler, and my God and my Lord hath need of me and comes to beg of me. O man, be very bountiful to Him, for He desires to be infinitely bountiful to you for ever and for ever during the long eternity.

D. It is indeed true that the inspired Psalmist wrote: *Thou art my God, because Thou hast no need of my goods*

(Psaln xv.). This was so, and, if God so pleased, would be so still. But out of His charity our God has invented a plan by which He has come to be in want of help from us, and so to need our goods. He is become poor exceedingly in this world, and every hour wants help from us.

## STATION II.

*And they brought the ass and her colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon (St. Matt. xxi.). And they brought the colt to Jesus, and they lay their garments on him, and He sat upon him (St. Mark xi.). And they brought him to Jesus, and casting their garments on the colt, they sat Jesus thereon (St. Luke xx.). And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt (St. John xii.). Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled what was written by the Prophet (Zach. ix.): Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke (St. Matt. xxi.).*

Zachary adds the words, *He is poor, and riding on an ass.*

A. Some commentators, comparing these passages, think that our Lord first sat on the ass long accustomed to the yoke, which was emblematic of the Jewish people who had long been subject to God's yoke, and afterwards rode through Jerusalem on the colt, upon which no man yet hath sat, which was emblematic of the Gentiles who till now have not been subjected to the yoke of God's law. Others think, and among them Father Coleridge, that He rode only on the colt.

B. If on this day of triumph, on His great festival-day, He is so poor and humble, how strong must be His love and predilection for poverty! St. Paul wrote, *I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be*

*able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans viii.).* Christ Jesus our Lord might respond, "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor might, nor height, nor depth shall separate Me from the love of poverty and from humility of Heart".

Why does our Lord so thoroughly love poverty? Why does He say, *Blessed are the poor?* Why does He denounce riches? Why say, *Woe to you rich?* Why does the Beloved Disciple write: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world?* Did not our God create this world, and all the things in it, and all its riches? This is true; and it is also true that all that came from God's hand is good; and, as St. Paul teaches, *All things are clean to the clean (Titus i.).* We know, he adds, *that to them that love God all things work together unto good (Romans viii.).* If our hearts were clean and loved God, riches and poverty would both equally well help us to serve God and do His work. But as good wholesome food sometimes becomes like a poison to the diseased stomach, so to the soul tainted and blinded and corrupted by sin, the good things of this earth become like deadly poison. In fact, the father of lies has so duped and poisoned and utterly vitiated the minds of men that they have unhesitatingly agreed to set up riches, honour, and pleasure as their three gods; and to these they give their hearts worship, turning their backs in scorn on the Eternal Trinity. What wonder, then, that our Saviour dreads riches and loves poverty, and tries to draw us to His poverty? *Blessed are ye poor (St. Luke vi.).* Every one that hath left house or lands for My Name's sake shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting (St. Matt. xix.).

## STATION III.

*A great multitude that was come to the festival-day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel (St. John xii. 12, 13).*

*And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way (St. Matt. xxi. 8).*

A. A great multitude therefore comes out from Jerusalem to meet the crowd that is accompanying Jesus from Jericho and Bethany.

The crowd coming out from Jerusalem perhaps consists more of strangers arrived in Jerusalem than of the inhabitants of that unfortunate city. The people there are too much afraid of their jealous Rulers to pay honour to Jesus. With what reason holy writers warn us all to strengthen ourselves against human respect! For Jesus says: *Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul. . . . He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him (St. Matt. x).*

This is what our Lord had said: *No prophet is accepted in his own country (St. Luke iv.). He came unto His own, and His own received Him not (St. John i.).* In His own favoured city He is not welcome. We are now His own people, the favoured ones. Are we giving Him any cause to say, *Woe to you! for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, long ago they would have done penance?*

B. *A very great multitude spread their garments in the way.* Not out of their superfluities are they now giving alms to our Blessed Lord. The grace of devotion given to them is so fervent that they give the garments they are wearing—probably their best, their holiday clothes—to be trodden down and spoiled, in order to do Him honour.

Fac cor dulce Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

Cast into our hearts some spark of the Divine fire which warmed the hearts of the crowd on this day of grace.

C. *Others cut boughs.* This, we may assume, was done by the owners of the trees, or with their full sanction. The watchful providence of the Heavenly Father would not suffer this holy procession to be disfigured by any lawless excesses.

If we were to witness now such enthusiasm at a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, many would be consoled and edified; but we might, on the other hand, find some secretly saying, "*Ut quid perditio hæc?*"—"To what purpose this waste?" (St. Matt. xxvi.). Should not the police be asked to prevent this destruction of the trees?

St. Thomas in his glorious hymn for the feast of Corpus Christi sides with the devout multitude, and exhorts us to vie with them.

Quantum potes tantum aude      Dare all thou canst through all thy days.  
Quia major omni laude,      And still seek new and worthier lays,  
Nec laudare sufficiat.      For still He soars beyond thy praise.

## STATION IV.

*And when He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in Heaven and glory on high (St. Luke xix.; St. Mark xi.).*

A. "*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte*"—*O all you who pass by the way, stay a little while and see and listen.* Our good angels watch us as we pass to and fro thoughtlessly, and they earnestly ask us to pause a little while, and observe with a holy envy this burst of gladness and devotion and thanksgiving from old and young around our Blessed Saviour. Look, they say, *and do according to the Model (Exodus xxv.).* O Christian soul, contemplate attentively this crowd of men and women and children,

praising God with a loud voice for all His mighty works—and go thou and do the like. Ought we to rest content, till praising God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost has become an easy, a pleasant and habitual exercise of our soul? How often do we hear Holy Church reminding us that "it is God's right, it is due to Him, it is only common justice and fairness, and besides, it is wholesome and salutary for ourselves that in all places and at all times we give thanks to Him"? *Speaking to yourselves*, St. Paul writes, *in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father* (Ephes. v.). This ought to be our habitual state. How near have we come to it?

B. But we must bear in mind that we have to eat our bread in the sweat of our brow. Holy thoughts and holy habits do not come naturally in our fallen state. We have by spiritual industry to learn a language new and strange to our corrupt nature, this heavenly language of praise and thanksgiving. Under our Lady's teaching we must practise until from our hearts we can say: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because He that is mighty hath done great things for me.*

C. Remember how oftentimes one small slight, or even an imagined slight, from a man, takes away all our thoughts from the countless good things that God is giving us! What a strange prodigy! One hasty word, one rude gesture from a man has more effect than all God's immense bounty! It is right, no doubt, to leave the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one that is lost; but is it wise to forget entirely ninety-nine blessings from God to go after one slight from a man, and follow it till, like the will o' the wisp, it leads us into the depths of the quagmire?

This was Aman's folly. *He called together to him his friends and Zares his wife: and he declared to them the greatness of his riches and the multitude of his children, and with*

*how great glory the King had advanced him above all his princes and servants. And after this he said: Queen Esther also hath invited no other to the banquet with the King but me; and with her I am also to dine to-morrow with the King. And, he continues, whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting at the King's gate* (Esther v.). Why is this? What magic power has Mardochai to counteract and embitter and poison all such wonderful prosperity? All Aman's blessings are effaced and blotted out simply because this one Jew will not rise up to honour the great Chancellor when he passes, nor even so much as move from the place where he sits. If Zares had been a sensible wife, and if Aman's friends had been true friends, they would all have come round the poor dotard and said urgently: "You foolish man, why need you go out by the gate where the Jew is? Forget that Jew entirely, and fix your thoughts on all your many blessings." But they were all evil counsellors, and advised him to turn his back on all his good things and go after this one vexation, to follow this one poor Jew, to persecute this one captive to the bitter end. What was the outcome? The foolish man lost all his ninety-nine blessings and was hanged on the one gibbet which he had prepared for Mardochai.

#### STATION V.

*And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation* (St. Luke xix. 41—44).

Our Lord was midway down the slope of Mount Olivet when He stayed to gaze so sadly on the city of His love. A chapel built by the Franciscan Fathers now stands upon the spot.

Over the *facade* stood a large cross; but the Turks, who by a mysterious permission of Divine Providence, are the masters of the Holy Land, ordered it to be taken down. They could not suffer it in so prominent a position. What accentuates in a more striking manner this animosity against the cross is the fact that they have allowed the Russians to erect on the summit of Mount Olivet a tower so high that it can be seen from the Dead Sea, a distance of about thirty miles.

There is scarcely any other place from which so beautiful a view of Jerusalem can be obtained as from the spot where our Lord halted to weep over His people.

A. "*O vos omnes*"—*O all you who pass by the way*, pause for a little time at least to see and to listen.

In the midst of the joy and triumph our Saviour is weeping. Why does He weep?

1st, Because when things go well with Him, His compassionate Heart cannot forget how ill it fares with others.

B. andly, Because He sees the time that is to come as clearly as the present.

We laugh and make merry, because we only see the scene that is under our eyes: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.), is the war-cry of the men of the world. War-cry, I say, because they are aggressive and wage most cruel war on all who will not adopt this maxim: *Let us lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn* (Wisdom ii.). The Holy Spirit, on the contrary, tells us that it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. Why so? Because in the house where a family are mourning round a death-bed, we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come (Eccles. vii.). If we could see what is coming so soon, our death-bed and the Judgment, present joys and present troubles would lose their power. It was a very high festival on the night when Baltassar, the King, had a thousand of his nobles around him in the banquet-hall. It was what our fathers would have called a right royal rout, when the princes and their wives were all drinking out of the gold and silver vessels brought from the Temple

of Jerusalem. But in an instant, joy was turned into terror when the handwriting on the wall called away attention from the things present to the things that were coming. God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and is given to the Medes and Persians. Then was the King's countenance changed, we read, and what wonder? and his thoughts troubled him. Oh, what wonder? and the joints of his loins were loosed; and his knees struck one against the other. What wonder? what wonder? For that which happened then would certainly happen now, too, if we only knew what is coming quite near at hand! The same night, we are told, Baltassar, the Chaldean King, was slain, and Darius, the Mede, succeeded to the kingdom, being three score and two years old (Daniel v.). A very familiar story often told, and often to be told again: "the same night, you will die, dear friend, and your heir will succeed in his tenth, or twentieth, or thirtieth year."

#### STATION VI.

And when He drew near, seeing the city He wept over it, saying: *If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace* (vv. 41, 42).

A. The Holy City! His own City! yet not so holy nor so much His own as the soul of a Christian man, created by Him! redeemed by Him! baptised unto His image! sanctified and consecrated by the union of the Holy Spirit! fed on His Sacred Body and Blood! the Bride of the Bridegroom, destined to share His eternal home! How often from His tabernacle does He look out on each of us, saying sorrowfully: *If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes.*

B. In this thy day. The short day on earth is our day; a day of exceeding privilege for us. Seeing our danger and how His enemy attacks us through hatred of our God, our Saviour has made redemption plentiful and salvation wonderfully easy. With a very slight effort we

can have our sins forgiven. And we have Emmanuel, that is, God with us; our Lord *always living* night and day on our altars *to intercede for us* (Hebrews vii.), and to listen to every cry.

Compare our condition, so abounding in grace, with the hopeless and joyless condition of the lost souls in Hell. Compare it with the loneliness and bereavement of Purgatory, where there is no Holy Mass, no Blessed Eucharist, no opportunities of gaining more merit or of winning more souls to our Lord.

In one point we may even compare with the state of the blessed in Heaven. For they can merit no more, nor can they any more suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritual writers have said that our Saviour came to earth to find what He could not have in Heaven, thorns and tribulations.

C. *In this thy day.* Alas! how quickly it is passing! While I speak, while I write, another and another of the precious and privileged moments is gone behind us, not to come back, till at the judgment-seat all our years and days and hours are reproduced and set in the full light of that world that is to come when our short day for traffic is over. May we never have to say: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved* (Jerem. viii.).

D. *If thou hadst known the things that are to thy peace.* At His Birth our Lord made haste to announce that He came to bring true peace: *Peace to men of good will.* On the last night of His life again, He said as one of His parting words to His Apostles: *Peace I leave you; My peace I give you* (St. John xiv.). After He was risen His favourite word of greeting was: *Peace be to you.*

He gives peace to the understanding through faith, hulling to rest all troubling doubts, and *every wind* of false doctrine (Ephes. iv.). He gives peace to the heart through humility, meekness, and submission; through poverty and charity and self-denial. But men, alas! reject with scorn the peace He offers. What is the result? This never-

ending wail: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us; and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. . . . Such things as these the sinners said in hell* (Wisdom v.).

E. *But now these things are hidden from thy eyes.*

Blindness of soul is the terrible consequence and chastisement of sin. Against His will, entirely against His will, our Father in Heaven is compelled to allow this chastisement to come upon us: *Go to this people, and say to them: With the ear you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears have they heard heavenly, and their eyes they have shut; lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them* (Acts xxviii.). From these words we might imagine that God wishes the blindness and hardness, but in reality He is only declaring that, entirely against His will, blindness and hardness is setting in through man's perversity: *Jerusalem, if thou hadst known!—How often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldst not.* "O Christian man, baptised in My blood, and fed with My Body and My Blood, if thou hadst known! but now, because thou wilt not pray, wilt not draw near to the altar of mercy during Holy Mass, wilt not invoke Holy Mary, wilt not even be merciful to the poor, all the things that are to thy peace are hidden from thy eyes."

F. *Thy enemies shall compass thee round and beat thee flat to the ground, because thou hast not known the day of thy visitation.* All that happened at the taking of Jerusalem, though so appalling, is as nothing to what shall go on in the everlasting prison-house of Hell. The Christian, the child of Heaven, deliberately renounces his birthright and his God, and chooses Satan for his master, and now has what he

has chosen. He is in the hands of Lucifer and his fallen angels. *Thy enemies, lost child of God, shall compass thee round and beat thee flat to the ground, because thou hast not known the day of thy visitation, thy day of privilege, when salvation was easy, when the Mother of God and ten thousand saints and angels were ever ready to pray for thee; when thou couldst have had forgiveness by saying from thy heart the one word, "peccavi". Alas! alas! The serpent deceived me.*

## SCENE II.

## JERUSALEM. THE PRECINCTS OF THE TEMPLE.

After our Blessed Lord's most sorrowful lament over Jerusalem, the procession descended to the torrent Cedron, passing on the right hand the Garden of Gethsemani. Then crossing one of the bridges over the torrent, they had to climb a very steep but short ascent to arrive at the Eastern Gate, sometimes called the Shusan Gate, sometimes the Beautiful Gate, later on the Golden Gate. This gate stood near the centre of the Eastern Wall, and led into the inner Court of the Temple, the Court of the Israelites. It was only opened on special occasions, such as this great Paschal season. It is supposed that our Saviour made His entrance through this gate. At present the Golden Gate is walled up. The Turks, it is said, have amongst them a prophecy, handed down from father to son, that one day the Christians will reconquer Palestine and make their entrance into Jerusalem through this Golden Gate. They hope to render this prophecy void by walling up the gateway.

A large part of the Holy City was built on three hills: Mount Zion formed the south-western portion; Mount Acra, the north-western; and Mount Moriah stood on the eastern side. On the southern slope of Mount Moriah down to the valley, lay the district called Ophel, where the poor people congregated. The Temple area occupied the greater part of Mount Moriah. Herod the Great, in the hope that magnificence might draw away the attention of the people from his tyranny and barbarous cruelty, had much enlarged the Temple precincts, and added greatly to the splendour of the buildings. The area, or plateau, in the centre of which the Temple stood, was therefore in our Lord's time about fifteen hundred feet in length, and nine hundred broad. It was divided into the outer court, into which the Gentiles might come, and the inner courts, into which only the children of Abraham might penetrate. Within this inner court was the portion reserved for the Priests and Levites; and here again in the innermost position stood the Sanctum Sanctorum, in which no one but the High Priest could go. So that the

Temple was not one large edifice like our cathedrals, but rather a succession of enclosures and buildings one within the other. The whole area was surrounded by a colonnade, called the Portico of Solomon.

The Mosque of Omar occupies now the site of the ancient Temple, and at the southern extremity of the church stands the Mosque of El Aksa, where formerly stood the church built by St. Helen in honour of our Lady's life in the Temple.

Beneath the Temple area are very large excavations called the Stables of Solomon. There, it is said, the Crusaders found room enough to stable two thousand horses.

## STATION I.

*And when He was come to Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the Prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee (St. Matt. xxi.).*

*The multitude, therefore, gave testimony, which was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason also the people came to meet Him, because they had heard that He had done this miracle (St. John xii.).*

A. We will contemplate the scene: the persons, the words, the actions as Jesus enters through the Beautiful Gate. Five centuries and a half before this time, the Prophet Zachary had seen in vision this triumphal entrance of our Lord, and had, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and speaking as God's delegate, called on the people to welcome their King. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King will come to thee: the just and Saviour. He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass (c. ix.).*

How thoroughly is the Divine will accomplished! As we listen, the men and women and children are with a wonderful fervour and enthusiasm crying out: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Blessed be the King Who cometh in the Name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven, and glory on high (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Luke xix.).*

Well may we with pious envy desire to have some share of this fervour. With what good reason Holy Church borrows the words of the inspired crowd and puts them into our hearts when the solemn time of the Consecration at Mass is coming, in the hope that we too, in the moment when our Blessed Saviour appears in the midst of us, shall greet Him from our hearts and say with much faith and hope and love, *Blessed is He that cometh* — our King so poor and meek, the Son of Man, the Son of Holy Mary, our Brother, our Saviour, our Jesus, our God and our All!

B. Now, too, *Sursum corda!* We must lift up our hearts; for during His Passiontide our Blessed Lord often reminds us that He will come again one day, not in His littleness and poverty, but as the King and Lord and Judge of all the living and the dead. If all the faithful on earth were joined to the Jews and Galileans at the Shusan Gate, all singing from their hearts the same *Hosanna*, that loud anthem would still give us no idea at all of the new *Magnificat* which the Blessed Mother will intone, and the heavenly choirs of angels and of men will take up and prolong when all is ended, when Judgment is done, and the King of Glory, followed by the countless hosts of His redeemed and sanctified, shall pass through the eternal gates into the Heavenly Jerusalem: *The tabernacle of God with men (where) He will dwell with them: and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.).

Here on this earth, *eye hath not seen* what that pageant shall be; *ear hath not heard* anything like that new song. Neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things, what manner of triumph the Eternal Father hath prepared for His Divine Son Who loved Him so well, and for all who have faithfully followed their

Lord, and remained with Him in His temptations (St. Luke xxiii.).

C. Here, too, we see in its true character the poverty of Christ Jesus; how He has nothing, but possesses all things. Silver and gold He hath none; but when was there ever on this earth emperor or conqueror so privileged as to have a triumph such as this one is?

Let us observe, moreover, how while He sits so poor on the ass, His poverty is enriching many, and will to the end of time enrich many.

"Poor Mother of a poor Son, Blessed Mother of a Blessed Son, pray for us that our hearts may learn to love this poverty so real, and yet enriching so many."

D. In this large multitude gathering on Mount Moriah we may distinguish three groups: the first, of those believing disciples who have come from Bethany and Jericho, and witnessed the raising of Lazarus; the second, of strangers who as yet know not Jesus, and are asking: *Who is this?* The third, of those who are looking on in malice incurable. Every *Hosanna* is only adding virulence to the poison that is corrupting their hearts. Judas is among them, still meditating how he can betray Him *conveniently*, and so regain what he lost at Bethany, when the true spikenard of Magdalen was not sold for three hundred pence, but wasted, as he thought, on the Body of the Lord.

*Ab ira, et odio, et omni mala voluntate, libera nos, Domine*—"From anger and hatred and all ill-will, deliver us, O Lord".

E. *The multitude gave testimony which was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave. The whole city was moved.* And behold, greater wonders far are wrought in our midst; and so plentiful is redemption that we grow familiar with these miracles as we do with the every-day sunlight.

Not one Lazarus, but ten thousand times a thousand are called out of the grave and raised from eternal death to heavenly life.



Men make long pilgrimages to see the tomb of Lazarus. How reasonable were the words of St. Louis: "I care not to see any miracle but the miracle wrought upon the altar by consecration". The tabernacle is better than the tomb of Lazarus. *Better is one day, O Lord, in Thy courts above thousands.* The Most Holy Eucharist is the memorial of (all) *His wonderful works* (Psalm cx.).

Spiritual writers warn us not to rely too much on sensible consolations and sensible fits of fervour, which come and go, but to labour to acquire a firm faith and strong convictions which are not so changeable. We are not bound to believe that all who cried *Hosanna* on Palm Sunday joined in the uproar of Good Friday against Jesus, but there is much reason to fear that very many were scandalised in Him.

## STATION II.

*And He entered into Jerusalem into the Temple, and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the Twelve* (St. Mark xi.).

*A. He entered into the Temple.*

The last of the Prophets foretold this visit. *Presently the Lord Whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament Whom you desire, shall come to His Temple. Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts . . . ; and who shall stand to see Him? for He is like a refining fire* (Malach. iii.).

The time is at hand when *He shall sit refining and cleansing.* For the present, He merely goes round as the Lord and Master to see in what condition His house is. He will return again to-morrow.

Let us pray for priests and people that we may all be able to say when He comes to judge: *Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house* (Psalm xxv.).

*B. When now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania, because now, as at His Birth, there is no place*

for Him in the town. Even those who love Him are afraid of incurring the wrath of the Pharisees by offering Him a lodging. Some commentators think that He was already excommunicated.

Where does He spend the night when He goes from the city? Possibly sometimes at the house of Lazarus, or with Simon the Leper; but sometimes at least, if not always, a part of the night in the Garden of Olives; for Judas knew that *Jesus had often resorted thither with His disciples* (St. John xviii.). He loved to be by the Sea of Tiberias, because those waters with their storms and the fishing-boat of Peter were to Him a picture of His future Church. And so did He love to be among the olive-trees and in the cornfields, because there He is reminded of His holy sacraments which are to give birth to His little ones, and to nourish them. *By the fruit of their corn, their wine, and their oil they are multiplied* (Psalm iv.).

*C. When now the eventide was come.*

Stay a little while to watch our Lord as He stands in the court outside the Temple preparing to go to Bethany. Of the great gathering some have gone to their homes or their lodgings; many are still around Jesus, very reluctant to leave Him. He is there reading the thoughts of all; of His friends and His enemies alike. *For all things were known to the Lord God before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beholdeth all things* (Eccles. xxiii.).

We have been contemplating the actions of His friends and listening to His words. Let us turn for a while to His enemies, whose most secret thoughts are present to Him.

## STATION III.

*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after Him* (St. John xii. 19).

*A. We prevail nothing.*

Some holy writers think that these Pharisees were

wavering, and beginning to believe in Him. It is certain that at this time *many of the chief men also believed in Him* (St. John xii. 42), but they do not seem to have been of the sect of the Pharisees; for St. John adds, *but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue*. More probably, therefore, the Pharisees are now rousing each other to stronger measures against Him.

B. *The whole world is gone after Him.*

Would it were true, dear Lord, that the whole world was gone after Thee! Oh, teach us to say more and more heartily, and with holy importunity, *Thy Kingdom come*. For what is Thy desire but that the fire be kindled which Thou art come to cast on the earth?

C. Observe the disastrous weakness of the chief men who believe, but, through fear of the Pharisees, will not confess. Had they been as bold and resolute as the Pharisees, the people would have followed them and confessed Christ, instead of denying Him. We must never forget that by our example and words we all lead others towards good or towards evil.

D. *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* Grant, O my God, that I may never prevail against Thee. *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*

E. *For fear of the Pharisees they did not confess.*

I cannot serve two masters. If I unduly fear and worship man, I must think much too little of God, and treat Him with contempt. Who has been hitherto my master? Who is now my master? God or man? Which do I reverence? Which do I condemn?

F. *For fear of the Pharisees they did not confess.*

Have I ever, by the weight of my example, or by ridicule or evil counsels, hindered any one from doing right? or led any one into sin? Have I discouraged almsgiving? hindered reconciliation and forgiveness? increased resentment? discontinued prayer or penance? mocked at fervour? impeded religious vocations?

STATION IV.

OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE.

*Now there were certain Gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying: Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. Again Andrew and Philip told Jesus* (vv. 20—22).

A. They come to Philip, Philip cometh to Andrew. So may we invoke a saint, that saint may go to our Lady, she to her Son.

B. Some called Gentiles may in their hearts be disciples of Christ. So too many are called Protestants who in their infancy became by Baptism true children of the Church, and may still retain the grace of faith and have a true desire to know our Lord and serve Him.

C. *Sir, we would see Jesus.*

Let us learn of these Gentiles. May our earnest desire be: Show us, Mother of God, the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

STATION V.

*But Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit* (vv. 23—25).

A. In the early part of His Public Life, our Saviour had said to His Apostles when He sent them to cast out unclean spirits and heal all manner of diseases, *Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles* (St. Matt. x.). To the woman of Canaan also He said: *I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs* (St. Matt. xv.). But now the time is near when all is to be changed by His Death. The Gentiles are no longer to be dogs, but children, and the Son of Man will be glorified in their conversion. Until now the grain of wheat has not been cast into the

ground to die. A little while, and from the tomb of Christ the good seed will spring up and be multiplied.

"By Thy Cross and Passion, O Lord, by Thy Death and burial deliver us, and may many be raised from death to life."

*B. Unless the grain of wheat dieth, itself remaineth alone.*

Comparatively few were converted till after the Death of Christ. The charity of His humble Heart was not ambitious, did not seek His own glory (1 Cor. ix.). *He that believeth in Me, the works that I do he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do* (St. John xiv.). *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours* (St. John iv.). St. Peter was to draw into his net more souls in one day than our Lord had gathered in three years. Even so must we be unselfish, and wish that God's Kingdom may come, not only through our own efforts, but even more through the work of others more worthy.

*C. Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground dieth, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, St. Paul writes, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal* (1 Cor. xiii.). But I cannot have charity, or love, unless self dies. Therefore, I cannot bear much fruit in the souls of others unless I die to self. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church, and a sacrifice of self, of our comforts, of our precedence, of our humours, our tastes, our will, our judgment, is oftentimes the necessary price to be paid for the conversion of friends. There are devils which cannot be driven out *without prayer and fasting* (St. Matt. xvii.), that is, without penance, or some sacrifice as painful as fasting.

#### STATION VI.

*He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal* (v. 25).

Our Blessed Saviour is giving us reasons why we

should take courage and die to self. If I am very fond of myself and of my comfort, and of being treated kindly and with honour, this very love of myself and of my well-being, ought to rouse me to win for my dear self everlasting rest and comfort and happiness and honour in Heaven by paying the requisite price of self-denial here. Better far a little trouble and pain now with everlasting joy and rest hereafter, than a considerable share of comforts now, followed by *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth* for ever. The wise men of this world gladly make a sacrifice and pay out money which they can badly spare, in order to secure some rich prize that will render them comfortable for the rest of their days. The poor man that found the treasure in the field, went home and sold all that he had in order to buy the coveted plot of ground.

#### STATION VII.

*If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there also shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour* (v. 26).

A. Another argument in favour of self-denial and the cross. If any man wishes to be My servant, let him follow Me. Every King who has a soldier serving under him has a right to say to him, "Wherever I am, on the march or on the battlefield, there you must be". And so our Lord says to us, "If you are My servant, follow Me to Calvary"; but He adds what no other master would say to his servant: "Where I am, in My Eternal Home, there shall My servant be". What general ever said to his soldiers: "Follow me, and you shall be till death with me in my home, at my table, sharing all with me"? The grateful Heart of our Lord goes much further than death. "Throughout eternity you shall be where I am, sharing in all I can share with you, if you follow Me here on earth." *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour (hath) appeared* (Titus iii.).

B. *If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour.* As if it were something very generous on our part, very charitable, very condescending, to minister to our Lord Jesus. If we are to be honoured by Thy Eternal Father for ministering to Thee, most loving Lord, what shall be done to Thee for ministering to us and dying for us?

C. And again: "*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus que retribuit mihi?*"—*What shall I give back to the Lord for all the things that He hath given back to me?* (Psalm cxv.). That is, for all His gratitude to me. For our Blessed Saviour, besides all the boundless love He deserves for having first loved us, deserves a new heartfelt of love for the boundless gratitude wherewith He repays whatever we do for Him.

#### STATION VIII.

*Now is My Soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour (v. 27).*

A. *Now is My Soul troubled.*

Here our Lord suddenly permits His Soul to be troubled, either through the agency of Satan, or without it, at the thought of His approaching Death. In the charity of His Heart He admits this trouble for our sake. He has been exhorting us to die to self, and now He humbly wishes us to see that His own blessed Soul shrinks and shudders at the prospect of bitter death. Hence St. Augustine speaks to our Lord with loving boldness: "Thou biddest my soul follow Thee, but now I see Thy own Soul troubled. What foundation can I find if the Rock gives way? But I understand the working of Thy compassion. Out of charity Thou dost permit Thyself to be troubled in order to console Thy weak followers, and hinder them from perishing when they feel hopeless. He raises us up to high things, but Himself suffers along with the most lowly of sufferers."

B. *And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour.*

According to some holy Fathers, He deliberates, "What shall I say? Shall I say, *Father, save Me from this hour?* Shall I ask My Father to deliver Me from the horrors of My Passion?" According to others, He does pray, as afterwards in the Garden, *Father, save Me from this hour! Let this chalice pass from Me.* But at once He adds:

C. *But for this I came unto this hour.* That is, *Not My will, but Thine be done;* "since for this alone, for this one object, I came on earth, and have come to this last hour of My life to do Thy will and redeem Thy children".

#### STATION IX.

*Father, glorify Thy name (v. 28).*

That is, "be it done to Me according to Thy word and Thy will, provided only Thy name be hallowed". How good a prayer for our use! Our Father, to us confusion of face (Daniel ix.), but hallowed be Thy name.

Let not this short word pass by and be forgotten. It is a prayer to be treasured up for use, and adopted.

#### STATION X.

*A voice therefore came from Heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (v. 28).*

A. This miracle may have helped on towards Christianity those Gentiles who were seeking to see our Lord. Added also to the triumph of the Palm Sunday, it may have afterwards helped the disciples to recover more quickly from the panic and the scandal occasioned by the Sacred Passion.

B. In His own good time our Lord will look down on His Vicar on earth and His suffering Church, and say: *I have before now glorified My name, and humbled My enemies, and I will do it again.*

## STATION XI.

*The multitude therefore said that it thundered. Others said an Angel spoke to Him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes (vv. 29, 30).*

God works miracles for our sakes, but men interpret miracles according to their humour. So can they interpret according to their fancy any words of Holy Scripture. Therefore has our Blessed Lord, in His charity, chosen as a safer path to truth, obedience to the living Apostolic voice. For we cannot interpret according to our humour the mandates of our living Superior. He is present to correct us and enforce His own meaning.

## STATION XII.

*Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31).*

A. *Now is the judgment of this world.* Some interpret: Now is the guilty world—the world made up of the men of Jerusalem, such as the priests, Herod and Pilate—about to be condemned by My Death. Others understand: Now is the fallen world, long oppressed by Satan, to be released and set free.

B. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Satan's great power was broken by the Death of Christ. He is driven out of our souls at Baptism, and again by absolution. He is driven out, and our Saviour comes in his place to abide with us in the Blessed Eucharist. Satan is also driven out of houses and of the water, and from the air, and the fire, by the blessings and exorcisms of the Church. We must with a lively faith duly value all these sacred blessings of Holy Church, so powerful against wicked spirits. Those who in their impotence utter imprecations, cursing men, animals, their

tools, their food and the like, cancel these blessings of the Church, and bring back the power of the devil.

C. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Our Blessed Lord, after His trouble, is now comforted by the thought of the victory He is to gain over Satan, and the conversion of the Gentiles, and the salvation of innumerable souls. We must add to this joy by helping, as much as we can, to cast out sin from the souls of men.

## STATION XIII.

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself (v. 32).*

A. This thought goes with the preceding one. Lucifer shall be driven out, and I from My Cross will draw all hearts, and reign in them as King. But, O Lord, if with Thy servant Abraham we may speak, who are but dust and ashes (Gen. xviii.), canst Thou accomplish this Thy desire, canst Thou draw all hearts to Thyself on Thy Cross without help from us? The wine-press Thou couldst tread all alone (Isaiah lxiii.), but must not faith in Thee come through hearing? Can men invoke Thee and be saved unless they first believe, and how shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Romans x.). Thy Apostle St. Paul was not afraid to say, *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the Church* (Coloss. i.). In Thy charity then, Thou hast left some part of Thy glorious work of redemption undone, that so we may help Thy work, and so be entitled to share Thy eternal reward.

*Fac cor dulce Jesu mei, fac ut nos amemus Te*—"Grant that we may love Thee, and help others to love Thee".

B. *I will draw all things to Myself.* We must each reflect: Has Jesus crucified been able to effect His promise and His wish in my regard? Are His other words come true in me? They shall look upon Me Whom they have

*pierced (Zach. xii.). You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains (Isaiah xii.).*

#### STATION XIV.

*The multitude answered Him: We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou: The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Jesus, therefore, said to them: Yet a little while the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth (vv. 34, 35).*

*A. We have heard, . . . and how sayest Thou?*

Here, as in countless other passages of Holy Writ, we see how absolutely necessary it is to have a Master and careful teaching when we wish to understand the revelation of God aright. What so easy, and what so utterly mischievous and ruinous as to run away with isolated texts, snatched up at random, and fasten our own interpretations to them, and then with hopeless obstinacy maintain to the death that our notion is God's truth?

*B. The Son of Man must be lifted up.* The men listening clearly understood the word used by our Lord to mean crucifixion or some other form of death, just as we understand that a criminal is to die when we hear that he is to be hanged.

*C. Who is this Son of Man?* He is my God, Who, because He loved me and wished to deliver Himself up for me and save me from the everlasting cruelty of Satan, was made Man and dwelt among us and died on Calvary.

*D. Yet a little while.* Call to mind Job's description of human life. *Man born of a woman, living for a short time (Job xiv.).* Add what lost souls, now acquainted with things eternal, think of time on earth; for the Holy Spirit has revealed to us some of the secrets of their prison-house. *What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? all those things are passed*

*away like a shadow—as a ship that passeth through the waves—as when a bird flieth through the air—as when an arrow is shot at a mark.—So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be.—Such things as these the sinners said in Hell (Wisdom).*

*Yet a little while* for earthly pleasures.

*Yet a little while* for earthly sufferings. St. Paul called these all light and momentary, after he had seen a glimpse of the world to come.

*Yet a little while*, to fight, then all is secure.

*Yet a little while*, to earn a higher place in Heaven.

*Yet a little while*, to do penance here and so shorten those sorrows of Purgatory which eye hath not seen and our thoughts cannot measure.

*Yet a little while*, to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion.

*Yet a little while*, to win the Heart of our Lord by giving alms to His poor; to the souls of sinners; to the holy sufferers in Purgatory.

*Yet a little while*, in which we can be so blessed as to drink of His Chalice with Christ Jesus and Holy Mary.

*E. The light is among you.* How often in the month? How often in the week? How often each day? How often each hour, do we thank our good Lord for calling us into His admirable light?

*F. How often, too, do we pray earnestly, and join penance with prayer for those who sit in darkness? Think not, Mardochai said to Esther, think not that thou mayest save thy life only because thou art in the King's house (Esther iv.).*

Some saints have said that every Christian must be a Christ. It is not less true that every Christian must be a Jesus, a Saviour.

#### STATION XV.

*These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them (v. 36).*

The sense seems to be that our Lord began to move

as if to leave the Temple and go back to Mount Olivet. But apparently He lingered to say some other words before His departure.

*He went away and hid Himself* from the malice of the Rulers, to prevent the multiplication of sins.

"Even so, dear Lord Jesus, often hast Thou been obliged to withdraw from our souls, and hide Thyself. All Thy loveliness, all Thy charity, all Thy wisdom have been hidden from us, and we preferred things vile and mean before Thee." Jerusalem, these things are hidden from thy eyes.

"Jesus, Son of David, Jesus, Son of Holy Mary, have mercy on us, that we may see."

#### STATION XVI.

*And whereas He had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in Him (v. 37).*

A. *They believed not.*

The voice from Heaven was one more great grace. It fell on the hard, bad soil, like the seed, and bore no fruit. *You shall die in your sins*, our Lord had said to them. *If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins* (St. John viii.).

Why this severe sentence? Our Blessed Saviour gave the explanation a little later to the Twelve. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.). *If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works* (St. John x.). O Lord our God, from our hidden sins cleanse us, and from the blindness which they cause deliver us. We are much more surrounded by the wonderful works of Christ Jesus in His Holy Church, than the Jews were in Jerusalem. But, alas! all these things may become, through our own fault, hidden from our eyes.

#### STATION XVII.

*However, many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue. For they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God (vv. 42, 43).*

A. *Many believed, but did not confess Him.*

We must often pray for those who are afraid to join the Church and confess Christ, through fear of men and temporal losses.

B. And if we ourselves are ever afraid to break our chains and confess our sins, let us remember at least to give alms and to do works of mercy, that the prayer of the poor may gain strength for us. *For water quenqueth a flaming fire and alms resisteth sin* (Ecclus. iii.).

C. *They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.*

By earnest meditation and fervent prayer, let us win grace to see how immeasurably better a thing it is to have glory from God than glory from men.

#### STATION XVIII.

*But Jesus cried and said: He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me, but in Him that sent Me (v. 44).*

A. *Jesus cried and said.*

Probably, as He was leaving the gathered crowd to retire to Bethania, He raised His voice and spoke this parting word of warning very loud, that it might make an impression on some at least of those present.

B. *In Him that sent Me.*

Observe that our Lord is the delegate and representative of His Father. In like manner, His Apostle is His Vicar, His delegate. *As the Father hath sent Me, I send you* (St. John xx.). *He that heareth you, heareth Me* (St. Luke x.). So, too, every lawful superior, within the limits of his office, is God's delegate and representative. So also every

one of our neighbours, every one needing help from us, comes to us as the proxy of our Lord: *Whenever you did it to one of My little ones you did it to Me.*

## STATION XIX.

*He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me* (v. 45).

A. Here, as in so many places, He declares His own Divinity.

We must desire earnestly to see and know Jesus, that so we may see and know our Father who is in Heaven. *This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou hast sent, Christ Jesus* (St. John xvii.). And as we gaze on Him in Heaven and contemplate all His perfections, we shall necessarily become like to Him, because we shall *see Him as He is* (St. John iii.). For it will be impossible not to love His goodness with all our hearts and all our minds and all our strength as soon as we once see Him as He is. And knowing Him thus and loving Him, we shall necessarily become a perfect image of Him, even as iron becomes fire when placed in contact with it.

B. Great thanks we must give to our Lord for becoming Man and thus enabling us to see Him, and through Him the Eternal Father.

C. If seeing God and knowing Him is to be our bliss in Heaven, why not begin to taste our future bliss here by often contemplating the Person, the words, the acts of Christ Jesus? If God is to be all my happiness in eternity, can He not content me here?

## STATION XX.

*I am come a Light into the world, that whoever believeth in Me may not remain in darkness* (v. 46).

*Whoever believeth in Me.* We believe rightly in Jesus Christ, when we accept Him as our God and our Teacher, and give up our souls to be taught by Him; and adopt

all His doctrines without any reserve or exception; not picking out some and leaving others in the spirit of heceny. Any one who thus accepts Christ our Lord and all His revelations, lives in a blaze of glorious light. The father of lies, therefore, labours incessantly to hinder belief in Christ, and to induce men to follow some other leader in one or other of the multiplied false religions. Let us pray often and earnestly for all *who sit in darkness.*

## STATION XXI.

*If any man hear My words and keep them not, I do not judge him; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world* (v. 47).

*I came not to judge.*

While on earth, and now in the Blessed Eucharist, our Blessed Lord's work is to seek and to save those who were lost. He is not with us to judge, but to save. Later, when all is over here, He will be our Judge. Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, that thy Divine Son may be able always to be our Saviour and not our severe Judge.

## STATION XXII.

*He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day* (v. 48).

At present, men dispute and cavil about the meaning of our Lord's words, as, for instance, when He said: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church* (St. Matt. xvi.). But, at the Judgment, every word will stand in such full, clear light, that even the Judge Himself will have no need to interpret. Everything at variance with the words of our Lord will stand at once condemned.



## STATION XXIII.

*For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is Life Everlasting. . . . Even as the Father said to Me, so do I speak (vv. 49, 50).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour, the Eternal Wisdom, with profound humility of Heart speaks nothing from Himself, only what His Father has commanded; and we, who have so little wisdom, are ever inclined, in our insane pride, to speak and act on our own impulse.

B. All false religions would cease to be, if those who teach adopted this rule of our Lord: "I speak nothing of Myself, but only what My Father hath commanded". All who have care of children, and all in authority, have great need to fix this word in their hearts by meditation: *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself (St. John xiv.).*

C. *I know that His commandment is Life Everlasting.* How blessed shall we be if we thoroughly persuade ourselves that God's commandment is Life Everlasting, that every word of God is the bread of life for our souls, both here and hereafter! *Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the council of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the Law of the Lord, and on His Law he shall meditate day and night (Psalm i.).* Let not the book of this Law depart from thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayest observe and do all things that are in it; *then shalt thou direct thy way and understand it (Josue i.).*

## SCENE III.

MOUNT OF OLIVES. THE NIGHT AFTER PALM SUNDAY.

## STATION I.

*These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them (St. John xii. 36).*

*In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple; but at night going out He abode in the mount that is called Olivet (St. Luke xxi. 37).*

*Leaving them, He went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there (St. Matt xxi. 17).*

A. After crying out with a loud voice His parting earnest word of warning, *He went away and hid Himself from them.*

It was easy for Him, as has been said, to hide Himself. Whenever He pleased their eyes were held and they could not recognise Him. Surrounded, then, by His chosen ones He passes away unnoticed. Contemplate Him with His Blessed Mother and His Apostles, and other faithful followers, walking tranquilly through the midst of His enemies who see not because He so wills. They know not whither He is gone, and He by going hinders many sins that His presence would have occasioned among His implacable enemies.

"O Jesus, Hidden God, have mercy on us, that we may see Thee, for our eyes also are held."

B. *At night He abode in the mount that is called Olivet.* Where, then, did He pass the night? Some interpreters think that He spent this night and the three following in the Garden of Gethsemani, preparing for His Sacred Passion by prayer. We know that *He passed the whole night in the prayer of God (St. Luke vi.)* before He selected His twelve Apostles. The occasion is now more solemn, and He would naturally wish to teach His future martyrs to prepare for their conflict by long and earnest prayer.

"Merciful Lord Jesus, give us grace ever to remember that even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, and that if we pray not, we shall enter into temptation."

C. Consider how easy it is to devote the night hours to any work that we love, and how unwilling we are to watch when we love not. When we read how the Saints spent nights in prayer, we must remember that love for Jesus Christ had become in them a strong passion. To those who have used holy violence, and torn down the veil between their souls and Jesus, His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness, but joy and gladness (Wisdom viii.).

What could the heart of our Blessed Lady do during these holy nights but watch with her Son, wishing what He wished, weeping when He wept, rejoicing at what comforted Him?

D. Contemplate our Saviour during these night hours. He has around Him the olive-trees, the corn-fields, and the vines; and, as has been said, they give consolation to His afflicted Heart, for He is thinking how souls will be gathered to Him through the wheaten bread and the juice of the grape; and how His dying servants will be soothed, and sanctified, and purified from the remnants of sin by the olive oil. *Thou waterest the hills, O Lord, that Thou mayest bring bread out of the earth, and that wine may cheer the heart of man, that he may make the face cheerful with oil, and that bread may strengthen man's heart* (Psalm ciii.). But bread and wine and oil are to do better and holier work than this.

"Attendie." O stay a little while, and watch the Sacred Heart of Jesus planning to become as bread and wine and oil for His people, and often asking His angels, His Holy Mother, and His eternal Father, *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?* (Isaiah v.).

E. When we are angry and resentful, we are not planning to become bread or wine or oil to our neighbours, but by wrangling to roar at them as enraged beasts do, or

to sting them cunningly as venomous serpents do, or to bite as dogs do. *Beware of dogs*, St. Paul writes. *Without are dogs*, St. John writes (Apoc. xxii.). They allude to those who with venomous tongues malign the children of the Church.

The Holy Ghost tells us that sinners go about not acting like bread and wine and oil towards their neighbours, but spreading infection by their words. *Their throat is an open sepulchre* (Psalm xiii. 3). Martha did not wish her brother's grave to be opened, lest the stench of corruption might be perceived. We can understand the force of the Psalmist's comparison by the mischief so often caused in our days by bad drains. We might write the similitude in this way: "Their throat is like a bad drain". Large sums are spent to get rid of a defective drain. Every one understands that no pains must be spared. It is a matter of life and death. Meanwhile there is above ground, in the drawing-room and dining-room, a bad drain continually spreading poison; one who by tale-bearing, detracting, calumniating and backbiting the absent, is every day and every night destroying the good name of a neighbour, poisoning the souls of listeners, and dishonouring grossly God the Father Who created, and God the Son Who redeemed, by thus wantonly multiplying sins.

F. We must think how we can imitate the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and plan to become good bread and wine and oil to our neighbour. By instructing others we feed and strengthen them. By cheering them and bringing back hope to their hearts we do the work of good wine. By soothing sorrow, by allaying anger, and bringing quarrels to an end we act as the oil of olives.

G. In the night He abode in the mount that is called Olivet.

*Thou hast appointed darkness and it is night*, the inspired Psalmist writes. *In it shall all the beasts of the woods go about. The young lions roaring after their prey and seeking*

*their meat from God. The sun ariseth and they are gathered together, and they shall lie down in their dens. Man shall go forth to his work and to his labour until the evening* (Psalm ciii.).

Man then is to be abroad by day, and the wild beasts by night. The night is man's time for repose; repose for the body, repose for the soul; for the body through sleep, and for the soul through intercourse with Jesus Christ our Lord. The stillness and darkness is created to favour sleep and to assist prayer. *In the day-time the Lord hath commanded His mercy* (works of mercy and charity), *and a canticle to Him in the night* (Psalm xli.). But the unseen spirits of darkness labour incessantly to spoil God's plans, and induce men to desecrate the sacred night-time.

H. If with perseverance we contemplate Jesus watching by night and praying for us, we shall find that a virtue comes out from Him to us. We shall get grace to cut down sleep to what is necessary and useful for us. We shall win grace to pray when we wake at night or are sleepless, for the Holy Souls and for sinners, and to turn to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Some, after being in bed for a little while, rise to pray for a few minutes to secure a blessing on the night, and grace to rise promptly in the morning. St. Ignatius wishes those who make his Exercises in full for thirty days, frequently to make a meditation at midnight. And many holy religious of both sexes carry out our Lord's wish for *a canticle to Him* in the night by breaking their sleep to chant their nocturns.

I. Some commentators think, and apparently with reason, that after praying for some time in the Garden to which He so often resorted, our Lord went on with His disciples to Bethany. This view seems more correct, for St. Matthew and St. Mark state clearly that *He went out to Bethania*. If so, observe to what a laborious life He trains His followers: since the night is far ad-

vanced when He crosses Mount Olivet with them to arrive at Bethany. Do they murmur at being obliged thus to watch and walk after their weary day? Thy sweet presence, O Lord, is to them better than sleep and rest. *Better is Thy mercy than lies* (Psalm lxii.); better than pleasant days, better than nights of still repose. "Blot out our iniquity, O Lord, which prevents our souls from resting in Thee."

J. The saints learned from our Lord to love prayer by night. How much of the strong faith of Ireland is due to the long hours devoted every night by St. Patrick to prayer and penance! How many graces are won for the unconscious world by the night-watches and holy psalmody of cloistered monks and virgins! Even among the faithful many can say with the Psalmist: *I rose at midnight to give praise to Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxviii.). "I trust to the holy hour on Thursday night for my contrition," a good and faithful servant of our Lord used to say.

At His Birth our Lord invited to His first reception shepherds keeping the night-watch. His Apostles, afterwards, were most of them fishermen accustomed to watch by night.

#### SCENE IV.

THE ROAD FROM BETHANY. MONDAY MORNING.

STATION I.

*In the morning returning into the city, He was hungry* (St. Matt. xxi. 18).

According to tradition, our Blessed Saviour on this morning went into Jerusalem by the road that runs round the base of Mount Olivet. The site of the fig-tree is still shown.

#### A. In the morning.

Our Divine Master, as we have seen, trained His followers to labour. If "early to bed" was not always

their rule, "early to rise" apparently was. St. Luke writes that during these last days of His life the people came early to Him in the Temple. The Latin word *manubant* is a word not often met with. It expresses that the people were spending the early hours waiting for Jesus and listening to Him.

Stay a little while to reflect on our early mornings. Are we in the temple betimes for Holy Mass? Do we secure quiet time in the morning for a meditation on our Lord's Life and Death? Or are we desecrating those hallowed morning hours by sloth? Are we giving much trouble and scandal by breakfasting in bed when not compelled by sickness?

B. *He was hungry.* What wonder! He had said before now: *My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me.* For others He would multiply the loaves, but for Himself He would not bid the stones become bread. And now that His working-day is nearly at an end, He redoubles, as we shall see, His efforts to save that which was lost, and forgets food and rest.

To St. Elizabeth of Hungary He revealed on one occasion, towards the end of her life, how much He had suffered from weariness and exhaustion. She was praying with great fervour, when suddenly she saw spread out before her a hand resplendently white and luminous, but very much wasted away, and with the fingers elongated, and in the palms a deep wound. By this last sign she knew that it was the hand of Jesus Christ, and was astonished to see it so lean and fleshless. The voice with which she was so familiar answered at once: "The cause is that I was worn away with watching and prayer by night, and journeying by day through towns and country places to preach the Kingdom of God".

C. How gladly would Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Simon have ministered to His wants, if permitted! But His compassionate Heart is turned so early in the morning towards Jerusalem, to seek and to save that which

was lost, that they have no opportunity of giving Him food.

D. How happy we should be had we on that morning been allowed to prepare breakfast for Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and some of the great Saints who were following Him! Waste no time in wishing for that happiness, but make haste to use your present great privilege. *Deal thy bread to the hungry* (Isaiah lviii.), for as long as you did it to one of these, *My least brethren, you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.).

E. *He was hungry.* That is, He allowed Himself to feel hunger and exhaustion. For forty days and nights in the wilderness He fasted and prayed, sustaining Himself not on bread, but on every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God (St. Matt. iv.). Then, after the forty days of retreat, *He was hungry*: and He allowed Himself to feel the natural effects of the long fast. Satan observed His exhausted state, and thought he had found the fitting time to tempt Him to act inordinately by providing some refreshment for Himself in a miraculous way.

F. *He was hungry.*

Before going on further to contemplate the last scenes of our Saviour's Passion, let us stay here a little while, and not hurry away. Allow time for an attentive consideration of His thirst, His hunger, and His weariness. We must no doubt also turn from Him to ourselves; for we look at Him in order to learn what to do ourselves. It is, however, still true that if we only glance hastily at Him, and then turn away too soon, to become engrossed with our own badness and cowardice and sensuality, the sure result will be discouragement and an increase of cowardice. We must never forget that it was while the Israelites looked on the brazen serpent that they were cured. If cowardly thoughts are setting in, this is a clear sign that we have turned our eyes away too soon from Jesus, and ceased to look on Him. We must go back to Him, and continue to contemplate His hunger, His thirst,

and His weariness, till, after a time, we find that virtue is coming out from Him to us; that a little of His Divine strength is being infused into us. "Passion of Christ, strengthen us."

G. We do not here want high thoughts and conceptions; we have to look at Jesus, hungry, thirsty, and tired, and say humbly and perseveringly, *Passio Christi, conforta me.*

First, "May Thy holy hunger and thirst, Lord Jesus, atone for my gluttony and greediness".

Secondly, "May Thy hunger and thirst awaken in me a desire to share Thy hunger, and Thy thirst, and Thy weariness".

"Blot out, merciful Jesus, my iniquity which hinders me from loving Thee, and wishing to suffer something for Thy sake."

*H. He was hungry.*

We will also remember, and not forget, that it is to the Passion of Christ that we owe not only life eternal, and, here on earth, the perpetual Sacrifice, the holy sacraments, and the forgiveness of our sins; but also that purified and hallowed and enlarged enjoyment of all the good things of this earth which is the outcome of our Blessed Saviour's plentiful redemption. We may say in all truth that our food, our refreshment, our rest, the sunlight by day, the stillness of the night, and all the kindness of domestic life and social life, all come to us blessed and sanctified by the Sacred Blood of our Saviour. Call to mind, therefore, what happened to David. He was in a fortress beleaguered by the Philistines: *And David longed and said, O that some man would give me water of the cistern of Bethlehem, which is in the gate.* The Philistines were at the time in possession of Bethlehem; but three of David's valiant men broke through the midst of the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the cistern of Bethlehem—and brought it to David to drink. *And he would not drink of it, but rather offered it to the Lord, saying: God forbid that I should*

*do this in the sight of my God; and should drink the blood of these men: for with the danger of their lives they have brought me this water. And therefore he would not drink (1 Paral. xi.).*

We must mark the words, *God forbid that I should drink the blood of these men: for with the danger of their lives they have brought me this water.* It is by His hunger and thirst and weariness and wounds, that our Blessed Saviour has won for us our present life in the Christian Church, with all its comforts and blessings. Even every cooling cup of water, and every refreshing breeze as they come to us now saying, *Sussum corda!* all are bought at a great price.

Should we not, then, be more occupied with love for the Giver than with the gifts? "O merciful Lord Jesus, blot out our iniquity which clings to Thy gifts, and forgets the Giver".

*I. He would not drink, but rather offered it to the Lord.*

If we give a cup of cold water to one of Christ's little ones in the name of a disciple, we shall not lose our reward, for we have given it to Christ. But there are two ways of giving a cup of cold water to Christ. We may give it out of our superfluity, without depriving ourselves; and even so, if we give it to one who wants, because He is Christ's disciple and our brother, we are sure of a reward. But if we rob ourselves, if we are thirsty ourselves and will not drink, but either give it to the thirsty or offer a sacrifice direct to our Lord, this is a much higher gift, and it comforts unspeakably His suffering Heart.

J. St. Ignatius reminds us that when health does not permit us to curtail food, we may sometimes safely share the thirst of our Saviour, and deny ourselves some refreshing drink.

"Passion of Christ, strengthen me, that I may conquer my selfish sensuality."

K. If we satisfy fully our hunger and our thirst with the meat and drink of this world, can we ever obtain a

strong relish for the Blessed Eucharist? or a strong hunger and thirst for graces? or for the conversion of our neighbour? Has not our Lady said: *The hungry He hath filled with good things*: but *the rich*—the contented, the satisfied, those who have had their fill of this earth's good things—*He hath sent empty away*?

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy, that I may crave less for the good things of the earth, and much more for Thee."

L. How easy it is to win graces for ourselves and others by sharing a little of our Saviour's weariness, by waiting for a little while before we give ourselves the rest we long for; or by not allowing ourselves the most comfortable positions! There are devils which cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting, that is, prayer and penance.

M. It will cheer us and strengthen us if we remember that as we deny ourselves comforts and share our Lord's hunger and thirst and weariness, a better hunger and thirst and love for Him will always be growing, and will make us forget our bodily privations.

"O most loving Heart of Jesus, if I had long ago listened to Thy voice, and denied my senses, Thou wouldst not be obliged to say to me now, *So long a time am I with you, and have you not known Me?*" (St. John xiv.).

## STATION II.

*And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came if perhaps He might find anything on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs. And answering He said to it: May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And His disciples heard it* (St. Mark xi. 13, 14).

A. *He came if perhaps He might find anything on it. Why did He come? Did He not know that there was not a fig on that tree?* Ecclesiasticus answers, under the

inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding the bottom of the deep. For all things were known to the Lord, before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beholdeth all things* (Ecclus. xxiii.). Every fig that grows must be helped to grow by Him. Well, therefore, He knows that there are none for Him on that tree.

Then wherefore does He come? It is only one more instance of the method used by the Divine Wisdom of teaching through parables and types and figures. When Isaac is bound on the altar, he is a type of something to come. Judith's victory over Holophernes is an image of the Blessed among women who was to crush the serpent's head. The stormy sea of Galilee is a picture of the Church's history. And even so our Lord now walks some distance to reach the fruitless fig-tree, merely to bring home to us vividly what He is continually doing when He comes to our souls in the hope of being comforted and refreshed by finding some good fruit. His people are the fig-tree, Jerusalem is the fig-tree, each one created to His image and redeemed by His Sacred Blood is the fig-tree. Our poor souls are each His fig-tree.

B. *It was not the time for figs.* And yet He comes as if He were merely a hungry man hoping against hope. For so He continually visits our souls, in spite of a long and sad experience, hoping against hope that He may at last find some fruit.

First, as He explains in His parables, He sends messengers, then lastly He comes Himself.

He comes, and is disappointed again and again, and He makes this meek expostulation: *Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed. How then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?* (Jerem. ii.).

C. *And answering He said to it: May no man eat of thee any more for ever. And the disciples heard it.*

*And answering.* For the tree may be supposed to say to Him, "I have no fruit for Thee".

Commentators observe that our Lord is often said to answer when no one has spoken to Him. He is either answering some secret thought in the mind of His hearers, or, as in this instance, what the circumstances seem to say.

*D. May no man eat any more of thee.*

The tree clearly deserved no curse. It had leaves, because it was the time of the year for leaves. It had no fruit, because it was not the time for fruit. But our Blessed Saviour, hungry though He be, is not really occupied in His mind with His hunger or with the fig-tree. He is addressing Himself to man, His own image, for whom the tree stands as a proxy. He is specially speaking to His chosen people, the Jews then, now ourselves.

A little time before, He had spoken another parable concerning a fig-tree which bore no fruit. The disappointed owner said to the dresser of the vineyard: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore: why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down* (St. Luke xiii.). The zealous Apostles on earth, the blessed Saints in Heaven, the loving Angel Guardian, and, above all, the Mother of God and men, are all interceding for the unprofitable servant, for the barren tree. And our Blessed Lord, Who is a *gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.), most gladly hears the intercession, and waits, and waits again.

E. But now His disciples are listening, and He wishes them to understand that the time is at hand when His people will pronounce the curse on themselves, and He, most unwillingly and with infinite sorrow of Heart, will

be compelled to ratify their suicidal sentence, and say: "Amen, be it done to you according to your fixed and wicked word".

O Lord Jesus, *gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil . . . return* (to us) *and forgive; and leave a blessing behind* (Joel ii.).

## SCENE V.

### JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.

#### STATION I.

*And they came to Jerusalem. And Jesus went into the Temple of God* (St. Mark xi.; St. Matt. xxi.).

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour with a large party of His disciples around Him, among whom, probably, our Blessed Lady is walking. It is still very early when they come round the base of the Mount of Olives, and walk up northward along the valley of Josaphat, and then crossing the bridge over the torrent of Cedron, climb the steep pathway up the slope of Mount Moriah to arrive at the Temple. Beyond what happened at the fig-tree, we have no record of any discourse made by our Saviour during the walk of two miles from Bethany. Perchance He was teaching His disciples, both present and to come, to love very much a reverential silence in the early morning, as they wend their way to the House of God and the Altar of Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

"Blessed Mother of God, our Morning Star, and all ye holy disciples of the Lord, pray for us that we may love to reverence and hallow and sanctify the holy hour of the Morning Sacrifice."

#### STATION II.

*And when He was entered into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and over-*

<sup>1</sup> In religious houses the time from the end of Night Prayers to the end of Mass next morning is called the time of the Great Silence.

*threw the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple (St. Mark xi.).*

A. Very early in His Public Life, at the first Pasch at which He assisted, our Saviour visited the Temple and cleansed it of all these abuses. *When He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also and the oxen; and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew. And to them that sold doves He said: Take these things hence; and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic (St. John ii.). And His disciples remembered that it was written: The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up (Psalm lxxviii).* Holy writers observe that on the first occasion He was more gentle with those who sold doves to the poor than to the money-changers and owners of oxen and sheep who dealt with the rich. Now at the end of His life He deals severely with all. He overthrew also the chairs of those who sold doves; for they now deserved severity, as they had not heeded His former correction.

B. *The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up.* Contemplate the zeal of our Saviour; His earnestness, His fearless boldness in maintaining the honour of His Father.

Zeal is a virtue specially odious to the luxurious and self-indulgent men and women of the world, to those of whom Sophonias speaks: *The men settled on their lees; the men who wish to enjoy present good things and not to be disturbed.* Ecclesiasticus describes such a one as *the man that hath peace in his possessions; that is at rest, whose ways are prosperous in all things, and that is yet able to take meat (Ecclus. xli.), that is, to enjoy life.* Zeal is a troublesome and odious virtue to such men. It censures them, and it sets a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother (St. Matt. x.). To all Catholics who are ambitious to serve two masters, that is, to stand well with the Protestant world and also with God, zeal is a most un-

pleasant virtue. They were getting on very well till the over-zeal of Ultramontanes roused up the Protestant spirit against Papal aggression. Surely, they cry out with indignation, Christ's Gospel is a Gospel of peace and brotherhood. They forget that it is Christ Himself Who says: *Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword (St. Matt. x.).*

But did not angels, so they contend, sing round the Crib: *Peace on earth?* Yes; but they spoke of that peace which the world cannot give; that peace which passeth understanding. The peace of the saints, the peace of the martyrs, is always a peace won by hard fighting. It is not at all like the effeminate peace of those who are settled on their lees (Sophon. i.); that is, of those whose peace consists in gratifying, without being disturbed, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; that most fragile peace which the thief can steal, and the moth consume, and which perishes when "the husks of swine, with which they fain would fill their bellies, no man will give to them" (St. Luke xv.).

C. *The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up.*

Have we some little share of our Lord's zeal for the beauty of His house? Do we gladly give alms to our Lord, so poor, so helpless, so dependent on us in His tabernacle? Have we a zeal that the house of our Lord may be not only worthy of Him, but also attractive to men, and above all to the poor?

D. Our souls also are the house of God. How welcome a home to our Lord is the soul He created for Himself! *If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him (St. John xiv.).*

And when He visits us at the time of Holy Communion, He is sometimes forced to say in sorrow: *My house is the house of prayer, but you make it a den of thieves.*

"Most compassionate Lord Jesus, blot out my iniquity." We must not rest contented till our souls are a house of prayer. Our Blessed Saviour never exaggerates. Yet



we read that He spoke a parable to prove that we ought *always to pray and not faint*. We pay large prices to a master who will teach us music or painting. Let us find some master who will teach us how to practise wisely and successfully this lesson of our Saviour: *That we must pray always and not faint*.

E. We are very angry sometimes if servants offend a second time after being once reproved. We give them hard words. Perchance they are even harshly discharged. But if the cattle-dealers and money-changers pay no attention to the order of our Saviour, but come back to desecrate the Temple, what great wonder is it if our mandates are also at times neglected? We are not more entitled to dutiful obedience than our Lord and Master was.

F. *And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple.*

How much more reverence does the Christian Church deserve, where Christ Jesus dwells in the tabernacle! Ought it to be used as a thoroughfare? or a short cut between street and street? If we enter a church to look at the architecture, ought we to go out again without giving a little time to our Blessed Saviour? "*Remember Me*, for without fault of Mine, and only because I have loved you, and delivered Myself for you, I am here, much forgotten in My narrow prison."

### STATION III.

*And there came to Him the blind and the lame in the Temple; and He healed them* (St. Matt. xxi.).

A. As soon as the abominations are cleansed away from God's house, wonders of mercy begin. In our retreats, first comes the Purgative way, and then heavenly lights and a great tranquillity in the Illuminative and Unitive ways.

B. Again, here we have what ought always to be: *the*

*blind and the lame came to the Temple and He healed them.* Our Lord's house is the home, the hospital, and the school of the blind and the lame. There they learn to see, and to walk in the way of God's commandments.

C. *Then came to Him the blind and the lame.*

"*Quis ascendet?*" (Psalm xxiii.) the Psalmist asks. *Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?* Who shall approach the holy altar to partake of the Bread of Angels? The blind and the lame may come, if only they desire to be cured. *Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened* (St. Matt. xi.). For not they that are in health need a physician, but they that are ill (St. Matt. ix.). And the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (St. Luke xix.).

D. "*Attendite.*" O all you who go by the way, stay here a little while and contemplate our Lord curing the blind and the lame. Do not go away till a strong hope comes that He will also now cure us who for so long a time have been miserably blind and lame.

E. Observe also how many of the blind and lame are helped by others to come to Jesus. Four men sometimes carry one palsied man. Are we helping any blind and any lame to draw near to our Lord?

### SCENE VI.

#### THE PALACE OF THE PRIESTS.

### STATION I.

*Which when the Chief Priests and the Scribes had heard, they sought how they might destroy Him. For they feared Him, because the whole multitude was in admiration at His doctrine* (St. Mark xi.).

A. *They sought to destroy Him. The multitude was in admiration.*

Holy writers remind us that the sun melts wax and hardens clay. Every new work of our Lord and every word that comes from Him is increasing the fire of charity in the

heart of His Holy Mother and those who love Him, but is acting like a deadly poison on those who are given up to sin and Satan.

In what way are the wonderful works of our Lord affecting us? Which is He to us, resurrection, or ruin? "O most merciful Lord—*tantus labor non sit cassus*—may all Thy toil, may all Thy tears and prayers not be rendered void in our souls!"

B. *They sought to destroy Him.*

Why cannot you, Anna, destroy Jesus to-day as well as later? St. John gives the answer, *because His hour had not yet come* (c. ii.). How clear stands out the truth which our Lord uttered, *I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it away from Me* (St. John x.). As long as He chooses, He walks about in the day, and no man can lay hands on Him. When He chooses, the night comes and they shall seize Him. *He was offered because it was His own will* (Isaiah liii.).

C. Let us observe well how thoroughly and miserably these poor men are duped by Satan. What cause have they to be troubled because Jesus is dear to the people? Who loves them as Jesus loves them?

## SCENE VII.

### THE TEMPLE.

#### STATION I.

*And the Chief Priests and Scribes seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: were moved with indignation, and said to Him, Hearst Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yea, have you never read: Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?* (St. Matt. xxi.).

A. Breathing vengeance and slaughter, these envious men hasten to the Temple; Jesus must be got rid of at any price! But lo! all their bold daring is gone, when they

come into His presence. They can do nothing at all but utter a foolish and weak remonstrance, *Hearst Thou what these say?*

"*Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine*. Unaided by Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, man is but a helpless nothing, and nothing can he do against Thee. He cannot even do work for Thee without Thy sanction and Thy help; but unspeakably helpless and foolish is he when he resists Thee, O Lord of love, and Lord of power!"

B. Mark how our Blessed Saviour silences His adversaries with a word from Holy Writ: *Have you never read, Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?*

So in the wilderness did He overcome and baffle each temptation of Satan with a word from the Holy Scripture. Hence we learn how useful a labour it is to fix holy words from God's revelation in our minds and hearts by meditation, that we may have them ready to hurl at the head of the tempter. *Thy words I have hidden in my heart* (O my Lord) *that I may not sin* (Psalm cxviii.).

C. "Most merciful Lord Jesus, Who canst draw perfect praise out of the mouths of infants, teach us at least in our old age, in our eleventh hour, to praise Thee and love Thee."

#### STATION II.

*And when evening was come, leaving them He went out of the city into Bethania and remained there* (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).

*In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple, but at night going out He abode in the Mount that is called Olivet* (St. Luke xxi.).

A. *When evening was come.*

Here then we are come to the close of another day, Monday in Holy Week.

We have no long discourses recorded by the Evangelists for to-day. Therefore as we know that He was early in

the Temple and only left it at evening, we may perhaps conclude that He spent a considerable time in cleansing the Temple from all profane abuses; and also that He devoted a long time to the work of healing the blind and the lame.

*Our little day is passing fast away. For a short while longer we can help Him in His Divine work of curing the lame and the blind: of cleansing and beautifying God's house—His sanctuary, His altar, and also His own house in our souls.*

We are surrounded by those *who sit in darkness*, and by those who are not walking in the way of God's commandments.

Are we making use of our marvellous opportunities? Are we daily becoming more clean of heart ourselves? Are we converting any of those who have gone astray, from the error of their ways? Are we covering the multitude of our sins by helping souls to salvation?

*B. In the day-time—in the Temple.—At night—in the Mount that is called Olivet.*

Once more contemplate our Blessed Saviour's poverty. In Jerusalem He has not whereon to lay His head.

Had you been living in Jerusalem would you have offered Him a lodging? Alas, even *many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him*, or entertain Him. Are we more brave against human respect than they? He does not now pass by our door to go at sundown to Bethany, but He says to us, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.). *Bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked cover him and despise not thy own flesh* (Isaiah lviii.).

*C. At night in the Mount.*

Neither must we forget how our Blessed Saviour, though so weary, yet when night comes finds His refreshment in praying for us. For night and day, He is *always living to intercede for us* (Hebrews vii.).

*Forget not the kindness of thy Surety* (Ecclus. xxix.). For He hath given His days and His nights and *His life for thee*.

#### SCENE VIII.

THE ROAD FROM BETHANY. TUESDAY MORNING.

#### STATION I.

*And when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And the disciples seeing it wondered, saying: How is it presently withered away? And Peter, remembering, said to Him: Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away* (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).

This morning again, Jesus goes to Jerusalem not by the path over Mount Olivet as on Palm Sunday, but by the lower road round the base of the Mount, as yesterday.

*The fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away.*

Say not, the Holy Ghost warns us, *Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? For the Most High is a patient rewarder* (Ecclus. v.). After sin, we can still buy and sell and eat and drink; and we think that no great harm is done. But wait a very little while and the delusion shall be dispelled. At the judgment it becomes manifest that the supernatural life of faith, hope, and charity is gone; and then the Christian men or women—no matter what their natural gifts of body and soul may be, no matter what their position in this world has been—are in the eyes of our Lord as worthless as this dried-up fig-tree. Their sentence is: *Depart from Me, accursed*.

#### STATION II.

*And Jesus answering saith to them: Have the faith of God. Amen, I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea; and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done; it shall be done to him* (St. Mark xi. 22, 23).

*A. Have the faith of God.*

Our Lord might have spoken to the Apostles of the coming rejection of the Jews prefigured by this withered tree. He prefers to inculcate a lesson useful to themselves: *Have the faith of God*; not only the usual degree of faith necessary for salvation; but the vivid faith which enables Apostles to work even greater wonders than their Master wrought (St. John xiv.).

B. We may learn from His example not to waste time in blaming the absent who hear not, but speak what is useful to those who are present and listening.

Luther and Latimer, and others like them, in their sermons loved to inveigh loudly and in coarse language against rulers, ecclesiastical and secular. St. Ignatius of Loyola strongly impresses on his sons that such abuse of absent magistrates and rulers does no good to the hearers, but very great harm to them and to many more besides. The priest in the pulpit is to speak words salutary to those who make it a duty to come to hear him.

### STATION III.

*Therefore I say unto you: All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive: and they shall come to you (St. Mark xi.).*

Here we have one disposition necessary for successful prayer—strong hope. Observe the difference between faith and hope. I may believe to a certain extent that God is good and very good, but yet allow the father of lies to persuade me that my case is exceptional; that God's goodness and mercy is not adequate to the greatness of my unworthiness. Here hope is wanting. Hope believes that even in my case God will be good and will hear, and will forgive, and will bless, and will love. *If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and*

*carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord (St. James i.).*

We must then pray on with persevering importunity, asking, seeking, knocking; and if a cloud of desolation comes over us and we are tempted to give up our prayer as useless, we must remember the golden rule: *Make not haste in the time of clouds.* We must not cut short prayer, but rather prolong it.

### STATION IV.

*And when you shall stand to pray: forgive, if you have ought against any man; that your Father also, Who is in Heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father, that is in Heaven, forgive you your sins (St. Mark xi. 25, 26).*

A. This lesson our Lord taught early in His Public Life, in the Sermon on the Mount. He repeated it later on when He promised His Apostles the power of loosing and binding, and, in answer to St. Peter's practical question, He taught us all that we must forgive *not only seven times, but seventy times seven times*. Now in these closing days, when every word becomes more impressive, He again, quite unexpectedly, reminds us all of this most important truth, that whenever we pray we must forgive from our hearts; otherwise our prayer will not be heard. *Man to man reverseth anger, and doth he seek remedy of God? He hath no mercy on a man like himself, and doth he entreat for his own sins? He that is but flesh, nourisheth anger, and doth he ask forgiveness of God? Who shall obtain pardon for his sins? (Eccius. xxviii.).* Therefore before we can obtain other blessings, we must secure for ourselves grace to forgive all; and to forgive entirely from our hearts, not in words only. Perhaps the quickest way of arriving at this necessary disposition is to begin by praying earnestly for those who seem to have wronged us. At first, we seem scarcely to mean what we say—as if the words were only lip words and our hearts were far away—but as we persevere grace grows. We come

at last to be able to ask blessings for our supposed enemy heartily, and then we find that the blessings are coming abundantly to ourselves.

B. There are five special times when we should make acts of forgiveness: (1) In the moment when we think we are wronged; (2) When we go to pray; (3) When we go to the altar to offer our gifts and receive Holy Communion; (4) When we go to the sacred tribunal to ask for absolution; (5) At night-time before we go to rest. *Let not the sun go down upon your anger* (Ephes. iv.).

## SCENE IX.

THE TEMPLE. TUESDAY MORNING.

### STATION I.

*And they come again to Jerusalem* (St. Mark xi.). *And it came to pass, that as He was teaching the people in the Temple and preaching the Gospel, the Chief Priests and the Scribes with the Ancients met together* (St. Luke xx.).

A. As we have seen already, it is very early in the morning. The people gather soon after daybreak, in order to be ready for Jesus. His enemies are as active out of hatred and envy as the people are through veneration and love. The Priests and Rulers are astir with the dawn, and are closeted in council on the Mount of Evil Counsel, or at the palace of the Priests, to see if they possibly can devise any plan for destroying Jesus.

On this day they will put forth all their strength to effect His ruin, and to-day He will utter, one after another, His strongest warning words to awaken their consciences and move them to repentance.

Can we see anywhere a more striking picture of the fatal power which we allow Satan to exercise over us by his lies? Here are the wise men of Jerusalem, the men who beyond all on earth have had opportunities of learning wisdom, spending hours and days in conspiracy to do away with their one true friend, their Creator and

their Redeemer. With what intensity have they since uttered the fruitless wail: *The serpent deceived me!*

Early, then, in the morning, they are in Council against Jesus; and, with more determined malice than ever before, they prepare a plan of campaign against Him. The different sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, will all act in concert in order to ensnare Him and find matter of accusation against Him.

### STATION II.

FIRST ONSET OF THE PRIESTS AND RULERS.

*And when He was come into the Temple, there came to Him, as He was teaching, the Chief Priests, and the Scribes and the Ancients. And they say to Him: By what authority dost Thou these things? And who hath given Thee this authority that Thou shouldst do these things?* (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).

A. Here is the first onset.

How appalling does the scene become, when a poor, insignificant man begins to sit in judgment on his God! and yet this scene occurs often enough. Men accuse God and His providence, and blame Him and condemn Him. *The Princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ* (Psalm ii.).

B. *By what authority dost Thou these things?*

The full answer to this question of these blind guides our Saviour gave soon after, at the Supper, to the Twelve: *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.). The man born blind also gave a short time ago to these proud men the correct answer to the question they are now putting, when he said to them: *Why, herein is a wonderful thing that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth. From the*

*beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this Man were of God He could not do anything* (St. John ix.). The eyes of this blind man's soul have been opened as well as those of his body, and most wisely he teaches his masters. But with what result? Their pride is roused to fury, and they scream out at him: *Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* If passion were not, as has been before said, entirely blinding them, they would see that their words, rightly understood, have this most ridiculous meaning: Dost thou who wast wholly born in sin, dare to teach us who were born immaculate?

Here is a terrible specimen of pride (*superbia*)—that passion that puts men above their position. These men are actually posing as if they had not been born in sin. "Mother of God, on whose lowliness the Lord looked down, pray for us sinners, that we may not be found among the proud whom thy Son scatters in the conceit of their hearts."

Knowing then that they were not seeking light or truth, but fighting against both, our Lord shaped His answer to them so as to confound their pride.

### STATION III.

#### OUR LORD'S REPLY.

*Jesus answering, said to them: I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The Baptism of John, whence was it? from Heaven or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying: If we shall say from Heaven, He will say to us: Why then did you not believe in him? But if we shall say from men, we are afraid of the multitude; for all held John as a prophet. And answering Jesus, they said, We know not. He also said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things* (St. Matt. xxi.).

*A. I also will ask you one word.*

Remember that to-day we have the great final struggle between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of Christ. Observe how calmly and effectively He crushes them.

Clearly these men do not want an answer to their question. They are in no need of more light. They have had from the works of our Lord such abundant testimony that He is the Christ, and the Messias, that long ago He has said to them: *Unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins* (St. John viii.). Now, once more, He offers them truth and light in abundance, so that if they had not been obstinately bent on rejecting Him, they must have fallen at His feet.

*B. They said, We know not.*

Observe how completely our Saviour's words baffle and silence them. Is His truth less powerful now? Are we to be afraid and half-hearted when sceptical antagonists come forward, as bold and scornful as the Pharisees, to scoff at the Resurrection, or at creation, or to proclaim the newly discovered beauties of Buddhism and Theosophy? Are we to be afraid that our Blessed Saviour founded His religion without leaving behind Him ample evidence to satisfy sensible men that faith in Him and His Church is most perfectly in accordance with right reason, and disbelief nothing but the foolish pride of men duped by Lucifer?

We must bless our Lord with all our hearts, because we belong to a *chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that (we) may declare His virtues Who hath called (us) out of darkness into His marvellous light* (1 St. Peter ii.).

Our Blessed Saviour follows up His victory, and adds on stronger words to shake the obstinacy of these poor dupes of Satan.

## STATION IV.

## FIRST PARABLE OF OUR LORD.

*But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first he said, Go, work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said, I go, Sir, and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him, The first (St. Matt. xxi.).*

*Which did the father's will?*

If the wise men who disputed with Stephen some months later, *were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke* (Acts vi.), what wonder that these Priests and Rulers are helpless babes before the face of Jesus? Whenever He pleases He draws them on to pronounce their own condemnation.

They are men who have for ever had fair words on their lips. It is not long since our Saviour addressed these stern words to them: *Hypocrites, well hath Isaiah prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me* (St. Matt. xv.). To-day we shall hear Him a little later on characterise them as men *who say and do not*. But they are but little prepared for the moral and conclusion which our Lord now proceeds to draw from His short parable. They have given their answer that the first son is the obedient one; that the second, who speaks fair words and does nothing, is disobedient.

## STATION V.

*Jesus saith to them: Amen, I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him; but you seeing it did not even afterwards repent that you might believe* (St. Matt. xxi.).

These are hard words for those deluded men whose habit it is to thank God that they are not sinners as the rest of men are.

It is then better to begin badly with publicans and end well, than to begin well and end badly. It is better to say, *I will not*, and afterwards repent and do what God wills, than to begin with fair words and promises and in the end do nothing. *Be ye doers of the word*, St. James charitably warns us, *and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves* (c. i.). Whether we began well or began ill, let us take care to end well.

"Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death, that we may do what is right now, and persevere to the end in doing right." For *he who shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved* (St. Matt. x.).

## STATION VI.

## THE SECOND PARABLE.

*Hear ye another parable. There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen; and went into a strange country* (St. Matt. xxi.).

A. With untiring and never-flagging enmity the Priests and Ancients will to-day heap attack on attack. With charity far more untiring, our Saviour multiplies His salutary words of confutation and rebuke.

"O most merciful Lord, do not grow tired of speaking to my poor soul, and give me grace that if to-day I hear Thy voice, I may not harden my heart" (Psalm xciv.).

In the first place, God our Creator is the Householder, Who plants the vineyard on this earth and provides all necessities, and then withdraws from this world, letting the vineyard to us, His husbandmen. *The Heaven of Heaven for the Lord, but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxlii.). He makes over the earth to us, as His

stewards. He allows us to be, as it were, supreme here. He will never unduly interfere with our free-will. He gives us great authority here, in order that we may, by being faithful over a few things, deserve to be set over more things and better things in eternity.

B. Secondly, the Jewish Church was in a special sense the chosen vineyard of the Lord. By the Prophet Isaiah our Saviour had already explained His parable more fully to the Jews: *My Beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place. And He fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a wine-press therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?* (Isaiah v.).

That the Jewish Church was the chosen vineyard of God Isaiah says expressly, a little further on: *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Juda His pleasant plant.*

The Jewish people and each individual of the nation had been protected and blessed by God in most wonderful ways. *The hidden and uncertain things* of God's wisdom had been manifested to them. The providence of God had drawn round them a wall of separation that protected them from the abominations of heathenism. They had Prophets and Priests on the watch-tower. They had the sacrifices and quasi-sacramental rites as means of grace.

C. But thirdly, in our meditations we must remember that in the Christian world all God's words are verified in a far more exalted sense.

1. The Christian Church is truly the vineyard on the sunny hill-side, and established on a most fruitful soil.

2. *He fenced it in* with a strong wall. No heresies can

find entrance. The promise made by the mouth of Isaiah is perfectly fulfilled. *A path and a way (to truth) shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way: the unclean shall not pass over it. No false teachers shall profane it, and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein* (Isaiah xxxv.).

3. *He picked the stones out of it.*

The most dangerous stones and stumbling-blocks are false doctrines and new Gospels. These are most carefully picked out from the vineyard of the Church.

4. *He planted it with the choicest vines.* All the heavenly virtues grow and flourish in the Church. The Blood of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist is the most choice wine that springeth forth virgins (Zach. ix.); that so inebriates the martyrs that they can shed their blood with joy; that warms the hearts of the faithful so that they can part with all their goods for the poor, and forgive their bitter enemies from their hearts.

5. *He built a tower in the midst thereof.* The Apostolic See is the tower on the rock. Thence the watchman sees all dangers that approach and gives warning with no uncertain sound.

6. *He set up a wine-press therein.* St. Mark writes: *Dug a place for the wine-fat* (c. xii.). The vast treasury of the Church contains a boundless store of grace won by the Life and Death of our Lord, by the merits and prayers of Holy Mary, the blood of the martyrs, the penance of confessors, the chastity of virgins. Through the Communion of Saints we have our share in them all, sometimes through sacraments, sometimes through the Holy Sacrifice, sometimes through Indulgences, and in countless other ways.

D. Moreover, fourthly, we must while contemplating bear in mind that every Christian soul may be called the Church in miniature. Every grace of the Church, the fence, the tower, the choice vines, the good seed, and the wine-press are, like the Blessed Eucharist, for all and for each. *Summi unus, summi mille.* Christ died for each; His



Redemption is wholly and entirely for each, the Blessed Eucharist for each.

Therefore Isaiah says: *The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Judah is His pleasant plant.* Each Christian soul is our Lord's loved vineyard, and each *His pleasant plant*.

With what complacency a good gardener stands looking at his pleasant plant! How unspeakably consoled our Lord is when He contemplates the soul that is bearing good fruit, and is *His pleasant plant!*

#### STATION VII.

*And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xii.). Who having laid hands on him beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent to them another servant, and him they wounded in the head and used him reproachfully. And again he sent another, and him they killed: and many others, of whom some they beat and others they killed. Therefore having yet one son most dear to him he also sent him unto them saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the heir: come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him they killed him and cast him out of the vineyard (St. Mark xii.).*

A. In this brief history of the Jewish Church our Blessed Saviour utters words which we might imagine would overawe the most hardened. As has been already said, He is to-day making His last supreme effort to overcome their obduracy. And when we remember the many prayers and tears He has poured out for them during His watchings, we see more clearly the terrible power of sin to poison and harden and blind the soul.

B. *He sent to the husbandmen . . . to receive the fruits.* Our Lord therefore asks for the fruits of His vineyard,

"*multifariam multisque modis*," as St. Paul writes (Hebrews i. 1), at sundry times and in divers manners.

To the Jewish Church He first spoke by Prophets, lastly through His Son. For the Christian Church the Divine Son began the teaching; and before He left the earth He uttered this solemn promise: *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth* (St. John xvi.). He began the teaching. The Holy Ghost continues it through the voice of the Apostle and his successors.

Throughout the ages then our Blessed Lord is either sending His messengers, or Himself visiting His Church to see if His vineyard is bearing good fruit.

C. So it is with each individual soul, *His pleasant plant*. Again and again He comes to console His sorrowful Heart by seeing that His Life and Death and His plentiful redemption have not all been in vain; and when He finds good fruits of charity, of patience, of humility, of faith, of hope, He is comforted ineffably.

D. *Who having laid hands on him sent him away empty.* For too often, as in the case of the Jews, all is disappointment. Apostrophising Jerusalem later on this very day, He can only address her in these awful terms, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

E. At last the time for patient forbearance is ended. The owner of the vineyard has at the entreaty of his faithful servants waited till every expedient has been tried.

Again He asks: *What is there that I ought to do more for My vineyard that I have not done?* And then by the mouth of Isaiah He foretold what He is actually doing to-day. *For now, He said, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard.* This prophetic word is literally to-day fulfilled. For now we see He calls on the priests and Pharisees to judge between Him and themselves.

## STATION VIII.

*When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say to Him: He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him the fruit in due season (St. Matt. xx.).*

A. *What will he do to those husbandmen?*

Observe how the wisdom of the Lord that can draw praise from the mouths of sucklings, draws from the lips of these murderous enemies their own sentence. His parable is so plain, so convincing, that involuntarily they pronounce the just award against the evil husbandmen, little thinking that they are speaking their own doom.

Very soon, however, our Saviour revealed the whole truth to them.

## STATION IX.

*Jesus saith to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures; The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? (the keystone of the arch). By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes. Therefore I say to you that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof (St. Matt. xxi.).*

A. *The Kingdom shall be taken from you.*

He could not more plainly pronounce their sentence. He had already said to them by Malachy (c. i.), *I have no pleasure in you, I will not accept a gift from your hands.* He had said by Daniel: *After sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His* (Daniel ix.). Now from His own lips they hear that they are going to be cast off. All the graces and blessings of the vineyard are to pass away from them to the Gentiles: *The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and be given to a nation yielding the fruit thereof.*

B. By the mouth of Isaiahs we are told more in detail what our Lord does when His vineyard utterly disappoints Him.

*And now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be wasted. I will break down the wall thereof and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged: but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it (Isaiahs v.).* These threats will never be carried out with regard to the whole Christian Church, which is to last and flourish till the consummation of the world.

But local Churches have been visited by God's anger. In the reign of the sacrilegious King Henry VIII. and his unhallowed daughter, the fence was cast down in England. Heresies rushed in and the vineyard was laid waste, and the people were commanded on pain of death to hearken no more to the warnings from the watch-tower.

C. It will perhaps be more practically useful if we study in contemplation how our Lord deals with individual souls which disappoint all His hopes.

*I will take away the hedge, I will break down the wall.*

The baptised children of a good Christian family are very carefully fenced round. Christian parents know that the baptised child is as one of God's angels, that might be transferred this very hour from earth to Heaven. They watch as having to render an account of the treasure confided to them.

Besides the commandments of God and the laws of Holy Church which surround innocent children as strong walls, domestic discipline renders them so secure that they have little cause to fear *the terror of the night or the arrow that flieth in the day* (Psaln xc.).

In a certain evil hour the young prodigal begins to wish for more freedom. If he or she persists, one great fence is at once beaten down to the ground. All the safeguards provided by parental authority and domestic discipline are destroyed. Soon after, the precepts of the Church no longer command reverence. A little while later, the great main wall of the commandments also falls to the ground. Then the five gates of the soul, the five senses, stand open and

entirely unprotected. Through the eyes death enters unopposed. Through the ears sin enters without let or hindrance. The choice vines planted by the owner of the vineyard are all blighted; faith, hope, charity, chastity, humility, flourish there no more.

*Briars and thorns shall come up.* Vice after vice grows strong, and at last our Lord, with a broken Heart, is compelled to pronounce the sentence of the ruined soul: *I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.* The Mother of God has ceased to pray; the poor are not pleading. No dew of grace come down from Heaven.

D. Souls in such a state sometimes lay the blame of their ruin on God. They murmur blasphemously that He requires too much from them. They hate God because He will judge and punish them. Our Lord asks: "Why is this? Is the reason that I looked that it (My vineyard) should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes? Am I wrong in expecting from the child that I have created to My image, and redeemed with My Blood, the good fruit of Christian holiness? Am I, after My Life and Death, to give up the kingdom of this world to Lucifer?" Our Lord closed this most earnest appeal to the Jewish rulers with the very decisive words which follow.

#### STATION X.

*Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder* (v. 44).

Christ is the Rock. St. Peter, because he is His Vicar, is also the Rock, against which neither waves nor winds nor all the powers of Hell can prevail. All St. Peter's strength and everlasting stability comes from our Lord. Any one who assails Him shall be broken and dashed to pieces; and when, in the end, the anger of our meek and patient Lord must come down on the reprobate, it will indeed grind them to powder. When He utters the final word, *Depart*

*from Me*, all strength, all courage, all hope, all joy, are gone for ever. Nothing remains but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and the never-ending moan, *The serpent deceived me.*

Now then, at length, the eyes of the Pharisees are opened. They see that they have been led on, in presence of the people, to acknowledge their own wickedness, and pronounce their own doom. Had they fallen at the feet of our Saviour and from their hearts said this one word, *Peccavi*, with what gladness of Heart would He have cancelled all their sins and removed them far as the east is from the west! But the dewfall from Heaven has not softened them. All the good seed has fallen on a hard highway, and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air devoured it (St. Luke viii.).

#### STATION XI.

*And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they knew that He spoke of them. And seeking to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet* (vv. 45, 46).

A. *They feared the multitudes.* This is their only reason for not at once destroying Jesus. In their hearts their sin is already consummated. In spirit and desire they have already scourged and crucified Him, but they feared the multitudes. We must notice this, that sins may oftentimes be thoroughly consummated in thought, though no outward act follows because we are deterred by possible natural or social consequences.

B. "How happy are they, loving Lord Jesus, who do not fear men but fear Thee!" For as the Holy Spirit teaches us, *the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him. He is their powerful Protector, and strong stay, a defence from the heat, and a cover from the sun at noon, a preservation from stumbling, and a help from falling. He raiseth up the soul, and enliveneth the eyes, and giveth health, and life, and blessing* (Ecclus. xxxiv.).

C. *They feared the multitudes.*  
*For wickedness is fearful* (Wisdom xvii.). They feared the multitudes, and the multitudes feared them. A few just and upright men, strong in their innocence, might have saved the doomed city.

## STATION XII.

## THE THIRD PARABLE.

*And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them*  
 (St. Matt. xxii. 1).

A. This, as has been said, is our Lord's last day for public teaching; the day of final struggle. He is bringing forth, one after another, parables and exhortations and threats and all manner of persuasive words, most calculated to shake the wicked determination of sinful men.

They are in return holding Councils again and again, and devising all kinds of snares and pitfalls, to see if they can destroy Him.

B. *Jesus answering.* Sometimes our Lord is giving answers to spoken words, sometimes to their secret thoughts.

C. Contemplate our Saviour, weary and hungry, yet most untiring in His efforts to save the lost sheep.

## STATION XIII.

*The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son* (v. 2).

A. The Incarnation is the marriage which the Eternal Father planned before all ages for His Son. In the Incarnation the Divine and Human Nature are made one, and what God has joined no power shall ever sunder. Even when our Lord died on Calvary, His Body and His Soul both remained united with the Divinity.

B. "*Attendite.*" Find leisure to think upon this wondrous mystery.

*He made a marriage for his son.*

Feed your soul with those words from the mouth of God which we hear so often read in the sanctuary:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

*And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth* (St. John i.).

Let us look a long time at this picture: *The Word made Flesh.* For at last the great truth will grow upon us, that as God is become Man, Man is to become God: that is, Man is to participate in the Divine Nature.

## STATION XIV.

*And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage; and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and faliings are killed, and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage* (vv. 3, 4).

A. We are invited not only to be spectators of the marriage, but to be raised up and ennobled in such an inconceivable way, that through Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist, through the water and blood that came from the Side of the Second Adam, we actually are made sharers in the marriage, and become the Bride of Christ. This union between us and Jesus Christ begins here on earth, but the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*, with all its joy, and gladness, and delight, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into man's heart to conceive, is to be celebrated in Heaven. Blessed, the Angel said, *bleased are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.* And he added to St. John, *These words of God are true* (Apoc. xix.).

"Attendite." *O all ye who go by the way, stay and listen to this Angel's words.*

*Blessed are they who are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.*

The festivities begun in that hour will never suddenly come to an end, or be disturbed. In this world, *laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning taketh hold of the end (the skirts) of joy* (Prov. xiv.). Not so there, for *neither mourning nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.).

Are we not by nature, even to excess, lovers of pleasure? Why then not secure for ourselves the true joys that are to be eternal?

B. Our Blessed Saviour has told us that the happiness of Heaven will consist in this, that *they shall know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ* (St. John xvii.).

But the knowledge will be a full and complete knowledge. *We shall see God as He is* (1 St. John iii.) in Himself; and this complete knowledge will constrain us to love Him with all our hearts, with all our minds, with our whole strength. Here on earth saints get a foretaste of this blissful knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.

C. St. Paul, who has been allowed to taste so largely of heavenly joys, is not afraid, after that, to utter boldly these astounding words, *I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans viii.).

St. Bernard also, in his most devout hymn, has a word that may encourage us to ask and seek and knock perseveringly, in order to obtain a strong love of our Lord. He says: *Expertus potest credere, quid sit Jesum diligere*—"He who has tried and tasted, and he alone, can rightly believe what it is to love Jesus".

## STATION XV.

*Again he sent other servants, etc.*

*But they neglected and went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandise* (v. 5).

A. *One to his farm, another to his merchandise.* If we refuse our Lord's invitation here, what shall we do during the long eternity? We shall have no pleasant farm, no interesting merchandise to occupy us, to distract our tortured minds from the everlasting meditation on our own incredible foolishness. *The serpent deceived me* we shall repeat with weeping and wailing, and Satan will answer scornfully: "Child of Heaven, you elected to serve me. Be content! you have had your reward, your heaven. Remember your pleasant farm and your merchandise, and how well things went with you!"

B. *Again he sent other servants.* Mark well how anxious our Heavenly Father is to gather us into His home. Anna, the mother of young Tobias, when he was absent, *could by no means be comforted, but daily running out looked round about and went into all the ways by which there seemed any hope he might return, that she might if possible see him coming* afar off (Tobias x.). Even so, as Jesus Christ tells us, our Heavenly Father is looking with infinite longing for His Prodigal, and sees him when he is yet afar off. Yet we hear men say: "I wish I could have faith, but I cannot"; "I wish I could get contrition, but I cannot". The spirits of darkness never tire of whispering lies: *Many say to my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God* (Psalm iii.).

How blessed they who answer this calumny of the father of lies with the Psalmist's words: *But Thou, O Lord, art my protector, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I have cried to the Lord with my voice, and He hath heard me from His holy hill. I have slept and have taken my rest, and I have risen up because the Lord hath protected me. I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God* (Psalm iii.).

## STATION XVI.

*And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the King had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city (vv. 6, 7).*

A. When our Lord on a former occasion preached the substance of this parable in Galilee (St. Luke xiv.), He omitted this sentence. He said that all the invited began to make excuses, but He did not add that they laid hands on the servants and were consequently destroyed. Now He conceals nothing; He reveals all that is coming in order to move His enemies to repent before it be too late. *I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts (Isaiah lxv.).*

## STATION XVII.

*Then he said to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests (vv. 8—10).*

A. First of all we must thank God very heartily that we have been gathered into His Church out of the highways, and not left out among the heretics and unbelievers.

B. Secondly, we must not forget that within the visible Church on earth there are bad and good. Fools indeed, and blind guides are they who, duped by Satan, undertake to invent new religions because they find scandals in the Church of Christ.

C. Thirdly, St. Peter shows us a much wiser course. Not content with being in the Church, you must, he tells us, labour that by good works you may make your calling and election sure (2 St. Peter ii.).

D. *The servants gathered both bad and good.*

Outside the pale of the visible Church, there are many properly baptised, some of whom may have kept the commandments from their youth. These the Apostles of Christ often gather into the visible fold because in their souls sin is not resisting grace. Again, Christ's Apostles sometimes find it easy to deal with souls that have sinned grievously, because their falls have humbled them and thus removed the great barrier of pride.

Those who resist God most are the proud, and He also resists them. To the proud Pharisees and Rulers, Christ says, as we have seen, *The publicans and harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you.* Even so, there is often better hope for fallen sinners conscious of their degradation, than for those false teachers who, blinded by great pride, give no heed at all to that warning of the Holy Ghost: *Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was (Hebrews v.).* They prophesy falsely to you in My Name, and I have not sent them, saith the Lord (Jerem. xxix.).

## STATION XVIII.

*And the King went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the King said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called but few are chosen (vv. 11—14).*

A. Faith, therefore, will not suffice unless we take care to have on the wedding garment of charity. If faith avail not without charity, still less will money or learning compensate for the want of love for God and man.

B. *He saw there a man.* One thought suggested by this passage is, that few will be cast out through want of the

wedding garment, compared with the multitudes who are never to taste of the banquet in Heaven because they obstinately refuse to come when invited.

*C. Many are called but few chosen.* Our Lord is, in this parable, speaking to the Jews, all of whom had been called to the Church, but only a few listened to the call. He does not teach that only a few of those who have followed the call and entered the Church shall be saved.<sup>1</sup>

## SCENE X.

### THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER IN THE PALACE OF THE PRIESTS.

*And the Chief Priests and the Scribes sought to lay hands on Him the same hour, but they feared the people, for they knew that He spoke this parable to them (St. Luke*

*xx. 19).*

*Then the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech (St. Matt. xxii. 15).*

The Pharisees and the Rulers therefore are more irritated than ever on account of the impression made on the people by the fearless and weighty words of our Blessed Saviour. We may assume that to-day again was often repeated the word spoken by the servants of the Priests on a former occasion, *Never did man speak like this Man* (St. John vii.). Gladly would they seize Him at once and hurry Him off to their dungeons, but they are afraid of the multitude, who are won to Him because *He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes* (St. Mark i.). Fear of the people then is the apparent cause that restrains them. But behind this obstacle which appears on the surface, lies the real hindrance to their murderous wishes, which is the Divine decree that His hour is not yet come.

For the moment, then, His enemies can do nothing but hold another Council to see if by any means they can ensnare Him in His speech. Up till now they have no impeachment against Him. Last Sunday they said in the bitterness of their hearts, *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* (St. John xii.). They are just as helpless now. They have still to begin from the very beginning to find matter of accusation before the Roman Governor.

It would appear that all the different sects or factions of Jerusalem assembled together in this Council and took part in

<sup>1</sup> See this text explained in *The Pearl of Hope*, or in *Holy Confidence*, an extract translated from the large work of Father Rogacci, S.J., called *Unum Necessarium*.

the deliberations, for we find them afterwards acting in concert on a prearranged plan.

The chief sects or factions then existing in Jerusalem were the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Scribes.

1. *The Herodians* were rather a political faction than a religious sect. They were the partisans of the Herods, and as the Herods were the creatures of Rome, put into authority by the Romans, the Herodians were men that Romanised. They approved of the tribute paid to Cæsar, and generally favoured Roman interests, and were by no means zealous for Jewish law. Herod the Great was not a Jew, and if he built the Temple to the true God in Jerusalem, he built another to the heathen gods in Cæsarea.

2. *The Pharisees* began by believing and teaching that Moses had received from God, in addition to the written law contained in the Pentateuch, a certain amount of oral teaching which was to be venerated as tradition. In course of time, this code of tradition, now become greatly enlarged, was in their eyes more sacred than the Divine precepts. They professed to lead a severe life, but from the action of our Lord when they accused the sinful woman (St. John viii.), and from many other passages in the Gospel, it would seem that their strictness inclined more to outward observances of their own inventions than to the *weightier things of the law* (St. Matt. xxiii. 23).

Though the resurrection of the dead was not expressly taught in the Pentateuch, yet they found it in the teaching of the Prophets, and therefore believed this dogma; and, so far from disbelieving miracles, they seemed rather to think that they had a right to expect miracles at every turn.

3. *The Sadducees* were the most opposed to the Pharisees. They were the forerunners of Martin Luther in his enmity to all traditions. They were for the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch only. Because they could not find the resurrection of the dead explicitly taught in the writings of Moses, they would not accept that doctrine. To the writings of the Prophets they did not give the same credence which they yielded to Moses.

For all the traditions of the Pharisees they had nothing but scorn. From pharisaic severity of life they were equally abhorrent. Their disbelief in the resurrection naturally inclined them to make the best of the present life, so that they were looked upon as worldly and sensual men. They were inclined to explain away all miracles and interpositions of God's providence, and professed that men by their industry and intellect and free-will could rule the course of events. For a short time, at one period, they had been supreme in Jerusalem; but ordinarily they had not the influence of the Scribes and Pharisees.

4. *The Scribes* were in the beginning good men who made a study of the law, and strove to maintain its observances among the people. Thus Esdras, who led the people back from the

Captivity, is described as a man *who had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do and to teach in Israel the commandments and judgment* (1 Esdras vii.). And we find him called *Esdras the Priest, the Scribe instructed in the words and commandments of the Lord, and the ceremonies in Israel*. Hence Artaxerxes commences the charter granted to him for the rebuilding of Jerusalem in this way: *Artaxerxes King of kings to Esdras the Priest, the most learned Scribe of the law of the God of Heaven, greeting*. Therefore, had the Scribes remained faithful, they would have been the theologians, the commentators, the canonists and moralists of the Jewish Church.

Gradually they fell away from a true and genuine study of the law; sacrificing the spirit for that exaggerated idolatry of the letter against which St. Paul so strongly inveighs. They abounded in traditions and glosses as much as the Pharisees did, and hence were for a time more akin to them than to the Sadducees, who, if they could have had their will, would have swept away all the commentaries of the Scribes, and adhered to the Bible of Moses, and nothing but that Bible. At the time of our Saviour the Scribes and Pharisees were antagonistic and rivals to each other. With the people oftentimes the Scribes carried more weight on account of their supposed learning, and very commonly the President of the Sanhedrin was a Scribe.

It is thought by some that the Scribes were less hostile to our Saviour, and did not join in the sentence passed upon Him. We shall see one instance in which they side with Him against the Sadducees, but in many other passages we find our Blessed Lord denouncing them as strongly as He denounced the Pharisees.

## STATION I.

### THE COUNCIL.

*Then the Pharisees going consulted among themselves.*

A. Contemplate the dismal and melancholy scene in this Council of blinded, weak, and helpless men, raging, and meditating most foolish things *against the Lord and against His Christ* (Psalm ii.). They accept greedily every suggestion offered to them by the fallen angel, their murderous enemy; suggestions which Satan himself knows to be most insane and stupid lies, and yet good enough for foolish men blinded by pride, whom he contemns as much as he hates them.

B. In this Council, out of their own mouths they condemn themselves. They are unanimous that till now they have nothing to lay before the Roman Governor

worthy of death. They must begin all over again on a new plan to collect evidence. All their shrewdest and most able disputants must attack Him one after another, to see if they can ensnare Him in His speech, and find something that shall look like treason against Caesar. Full of this new scheme they return to the portico of the Temple.

"Blessed be God for His mercy." *I have not sat with the Council of Vanity, neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things. I have hated the assembly of the malignant, and with the wicked I will not sit* (Psalm xxv. 4, 5).

## SCENE XI.

### THE PORTICO OF THE TEMPLE. TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

## STATION I.

### QUESTIONS TO ENSNARE JESUS.

*And being on the watch they sent spies who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and power of the Governor* (St. Luke xx. 20).

A. Contemplate these spies, these proud, self-sufficient men, glad to be picked out as clever and skilful in argument, each confident that he will conquer Jesus. Holy Job was more wise. He said: *Man cannot be justified compared with God. If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one for a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hath resisted Him and hath had peace?* (c. ix.). "Lord Jesus, show forth Thy wonderful mercies. From them that resist Thy right hand keep me as the apple of Thy eye" (Psalm xvi.).

B. Observe, too, how already their plan is fixed that He is to be delivered to the authority and power of the Roman Governor. For they are resolved on His death, but to us it is *not allowed to kill any one* (St. John xviii.); and they are resolved, moreover, that He must die by the terrible Roman



punishment of crucifixion. Our Saviour's prophecy must be fulfilled: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death and deliver Him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified* (St. Matt. xx.). His own Apostle shall betray Him to the Priests and Scribes; and His own priests shall deliver Him up to the heathen strangers. Observe, how His own, when once corrupted, are His worst enemies.

C. Contemplate, then, these hypocritical spies coming up one after another to ensnare Him with captious questions, while the Priests and Pharisees look on, watching with a malicious eagerness which they cannot disguise. Hear their first champions.

#### STATION II.

##### THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS.

The Pharisees sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: *Master, we know that Thou speakest and teachest rightly, and Thou dost not respect any person, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us therefore what dost Thou think: is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?* (St. Matt. xxii. 16, 17; St. Luke xx.).

A. The Herodians and Pharisees were not friends; but all coalesce against Christ. So now, too, all sects combine against His Church. All who are worldly, no matter what their sect, combine against Jesus Christ. *Let us lie in wait for the Just* (Wisdom ii.).

B. *Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?* This they hope will prove a murderous question. It is framed with a diabolic skill, like some of those questions prepared in our courts by the Crown lawyers bent on shedding the blood of Blessed Thomas More, Blessed Bishop Fisher, and the rest. Among the Jews there was a strong feeling against paying tribute to Caesar: but the Herodians, because Herod had been made King by the Romans, favoured this tribute. If our Lord says "No," they will report Him to Pilate and have Him crucified. If "Yes," they will tell the

people that He is a friend to the Romans and a traitor to them.

C. If men can be so crafty, so malicious, so unpurposive, so bloodthirsty, what must Satan be? And yet we perpetually trust him rather than our Lord, and look to him for friendly counsel. With reason our Lord, Who knows thoroughly the intensity of Satan's cruel malice against us, says to us so earnestly: *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation*. What wonder He wishes us to say always in our familiar prayer, never tiring: *Lead us not into temptation?*

#### STATION III.

##### JESUS ANSWERS.

*But He, considering their guile, said to them: Why tempt you Me?* (St. Luke xx. 23.).

By the mouth of His Prophet Jeremias God says: *The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable, who can know it?* And then He immediately answers His own question: *I am the Lord, Who search the heart, and prove the reins: Who give to every one according to his way and according to the fruit of his devices* (c. xvii.).

These clever men little dream that our Blessed Saviour saw them in the Council-Chamber, heard every word, and read all their unuttered thoughts.

"Give me grace, O Lord, to live in Thy presence, to remember always that I am under Thy all-seeing eye."

#### STATION IV.

*Show me a penny. Whose image and inscription hath it? They answering said to Him: Caesar's. And He said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's* (vv. 24, 25).

A. Contemplate this most unequal contest between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God; the facility with which our Saviour baffles their schemes. *Who is as the Lord our God Who dwelleth on high?* (Psalm cxii.). *Thou*

being *Master of power judgest with tranquillity* (Wisdom xii.). Think of the supreme foolishness of those whom the father of lies persuades to trust to their own intellects and their science, rather than to the revelations of the all-wise God. Alas ! they will spend their eternity *weeping, weeping and gnashing their teeth*, and saying, full of anguish and rage : *We fools. We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us* (Wisdom v.). And the mocking spirits answer : "What is that to us, disciple of Christ ? You look to it. Remember the day and the hour when we advised you to renounce Jesus, and to take Lucifer for your king and your master for ever, and you consented. You have what you chose, be at peace. Jesus and His friends repeated till you were tired of hearing it, that here there would be *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*, but you still preferred to be with us. So be ready now to give praise and reverence and service to your king and lord and master, Lucifer."

B. *Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God !*

Make a careful examination : do we give to our neighbour what belongs to him ? do we give to God what belongs to God ?

To God, and also to man His image, we owe *praise, reverence, service* : do we *praise* ; do we *reverence* ; do we *serve* God ?

Do we *praise*, do we *reverence*, do we *serve* God's image, man, our neighbour ?

And to ourselves what is due ? Daniel answers : *To us, O Lord, who have sinned, confusion of face* (c. ix.).

C. Even the crafty spies, and their masters who put them forward, are filled with wonder and astonishment at the simple answer of our Lord.

*And hearing they wondered, and leaving Him they went their ways* (St. Matt.). *And they marvelled at Him* (St. Mark xii.). *And they could not reprehend His word before the people : and wondering at His answer they held their peace*

(St. Luke xx.). Alas ! why did they not acknowledge themselves conquered and become the disciples of so wise a Master ? *Who hath bewitched you ?* St. Paul would ask, that you prefer to serve the most foolish of all fools, the fallen angel, who would not serve his God ?

#### STATION V.

#### THE SADDUCEES. THEIR CAPTIOUS QUESTION.

*And there came to Him some of the Sadducees, and they asked Him, saying : . . . In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be ? And Jesus said to them : The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection shall neither be married nor take wives. Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection* (St. Luke xx. 33—36).

The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees discomfited, come forward, full of hope that their learning will succeed better. They do not believe in the resurrection. *They say there is no resurrection* (St. Matt. xxii.); and they propose what they think a subtle case of the woman who had been married to seven brothers in succession.

A. Mark how our Lord impresses on them the doctrine of the resurrection, and tries to spiritualise their views.

B. Let us pray humbly and earnestly, not once nor seven times, but seventy times seven times, that we may be the children of God accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection.

#### STATION VI.

*And the multitudes hearing it were in admiration at His doctrine* (St. Matt. xxii. 33).

Let us join with our Blessed Lady, saying : *My soul doth magnify the Lord : for He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians are all baffled and silenced.*

Alas ! why do they continue to *kick against the goad* ? why do they not fall down at His feet, saying : *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?* (Acts ix.).

Full of charity for their souls, our Blessed Saviour goes on to prove to the Sadducees the all-important doctrine of the resurrection.

*Now, that the dead rise again, Moses also showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord : The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him* (St. Luke xx.).

A. *He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

The implied conclusion is : therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living, and not extinct, as the Sadducees maintained.

B. *He is not the God of the dead.*

Therefore, too, His Church must be a living Church.

*We are the disciples of Moses*, the Pharisees said ; *we know that God spoke to Moses*. But our Blessed Saviour insisted that they must believe in Him, the living Messiah. *If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sin* (St. John viii.). A Church that only believes in Moses, or in the Church of the first four centuries, and rejects all living authority, is not a living Church, but dead, and no Church of Christ. For He is the God of the living, and the Supreme Head of the one living Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

C. By thus maintaining the doctrine of the resurrection, our Lord made a good impression on some of the Scribes who did not belong to the sect of the Sadducees. Some of the Scribes answering, said to Him, *Master, Thou hast said well* (St. Luke xx.).

If afterwards they grew in grace, and came to believe in Him, they would recognise with humble gladness that He is justified in all His words, and that *He hath done all things well* (St. Mark vii.). *The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works* (Psalm cxlv.).

## STATION VII.

### THE SCRIBE.

*And there came one of the Scribes.*

And now a better disposed man comes forward, a Scribe, but not one of the conspirators against our Saviour.

*There came one of the Scribes who had heard them reasoning together, and seeing that He had answered them well, asked Him which was the first commandment of all* (St. Mark xii. 28).

St. Matthew's account seems at first sight to differ from this.

*But the Pharisees, hearing that He had silenced the Sadducees, came together, and one of them, a Doctor of the Law, asked Him, tempting Him, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law ?* Jesus said to him : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets* (St. Matt. xxii.).

From what follows in St. Mark's Gospel, the commentators reconcile the two narratives in this way. The Pharisees, with most unhappy perseverance, are anxious to make a new effort to *ensnare Him in His speech*, and to effect what the Sadducees and Herodians failed to do. This Scribe tells them that he has a difficult question on his mind that he would like to ask. He is really desirous to see whether Jesus can give him a good answer ; but the Pharisees put him forward merely to gain their own ends—that is, to see whether they can find anything against the Law of Moses in His teaching.

## STATION VIII.

*Jesus answered : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, etc. And the Scribe said to Him : Well, Master, Thou hast said in truth that there is one God, and there is no other besides Him, and that He should be*

*loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength: and to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God (St. Mark xii.).*

A. Each answer given by our Lord was a victory over human folly, and these victories ought to have beaten down the passions and prejudices of the Pharisees. Have we not reason to tremble at the terrible power of sin, and the blindness and hardness of heart which result from sin? "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"—*Who understands sins?* (Psaln xviii.).

B. And here we have matter for many hours of contemplation. "Listen to the words," St. Ignatius says when he teaches us how to contemplate. What words deserve to be listened to if these do not?

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*On these two commandments, our Lord added, dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets.* St. Paul simplifies our work still farther. He writes to the Romans, and his teaching is the teaching of the Holy Ghost: *He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the Law* (Romans xiii.). He knew that he who rightly loves God's image will also love the unseen God.

This then is *all man* (Eccles. xii.) to love God, and to love man, His image. Let us beg earnestly for a share of that Divine light which is dawning in the heart of this Scribe: *That to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.*

#### STATION IX.

*And no man after that dared ask Him any question* (St. Mark xii.).

They have gained nothing. They have not ensnared Him in His words.

Alas! how easily Satan ensnares us in our words. How easily he induces us to utter words which dishonour God, injure our neighbour, and defile our own souls! Do we often and fervently pray with the Psalmist, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips?* (Psaln cxl.). Our Lord's Body rests on our tongues at Holy Communion. He, at least, has the power to tame the restless tongue that *no man can tame* (St. James iii.).

#### STATION X.

#### OUR LORDS QUESTION.

*And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus answering said, teaching in the Temple: How do the Scribes say that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth Him Lord, and whence is He then his Son? And a great multitude heard Him gladly. And no man was able to answer Him a word. Neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions* (St. Mark xii.; St. Matt. xxii.).

A. It is now our Lord's turn to ask questions. Contrast His Spirit with the malice of men. *Oh, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.). Their whole aim and object is to ensnare Him, for this they put forth all their talents and all their energy. His only retaliation is by trying to induce them to open their eyes and see the light. David, He argues, calls the Christ, *Lord*. Therefore the Christ, the Messias, must be something higher than a mere son of David. The argument is unanswerable. *No man was able to answer a word.* It went home to the hearts of many in the surrounding crowd. *A great multitude heard Him gladly.* But our Lord asks in sorrow by His Prophet, *Who is blind but he that is sold? or who is blind but the servant of the Lord?* (Isaiah xlii.). These Priests and Rulers are sold as slaves to Satan, and are blind.

By the Levitical law the blind and the lame were forbidden to minister to the Lord in His Temple, but now the Priests in Jerusalem are blind with a blindness of the worst kind. Had any one else argued as clearly as our Saviour, the reasoning would have prevailed, but *who is blind but My servant?*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, for to Thee only have I sinned.* "Grant me grace, O Lord, to be always among those who hear Thee gladly, and never with those who, though silenced, are not won by Thy teachings."

*B. And the Pharisees being gathered together.*

From these words, and many others, we see that during the course of this day of final struggle, the Pharisees and Scribes and Priests were sometimes round our Lord listening, and then retired again to deliberate and see whether they could dare to seize Him. Their conclusion was that it would be dangerous, on account of the influence Jesus had among the people. They were not aware that the Eternal Providence of God had fixed the day and the hour when they were to have liberty to work their will against Him, and that till that hour is come they were powerless.

"Fix in our hearts, O Lord, this truth, that so long as Thou art pleased to protect us, harm cannot come near us."

## SCENE XII.

OUR LORD'S LAST PUBLIC DISCOURSE. TUESDAY  
AFTERNOON.

### STATION I.

This has been a long day of struggle. Jesus, as we see in St. Luke xxi., used to come in early from Bethania to begin His teaching. *And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple to hear Him* (v. 38).

The different sects of Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians, have all combined with the learned Scribes, the Priests, and the Ancients for a supreme effort. The day is

wearing on. It is now the afternoon. All His antagonists have been baffled and silenced, and the people are favourably disposed towards Jesus. As sometimes on former occasions He saw that it was the time to be silent and to hide Himself, so now, full of sorrow of heart and indignation at the scandal and havoc caused among the people by these wicked Rulers, He sees it is the time to speak aloud. *There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.). Now, therefore, He reveals His thoughts with marvellous fortitude and fearlessness in the face of these raging enemies.

### STATION II.

*Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples*  
(St. Matt. xxiii.).

*In the hearing of all the people He said to His disciples*  
(St. Luke xx.).

This is His last public discourse, His solemn and final warning. In the hearing then of all the people, after enduring all the forenoon the assaults of His enemies, He begins His terrible reply to them.

A. Observe how His practice at that hour teaches us that it is lawful to expose publicly the wickedness of men, if thereby we can lessen their influence and power of corrupting others.

B. But notice also how He takes care first to secure respect and reverence for the official character and position of those who are mercilessly persecuting Him.

### STATION III.

*The Scribes and Pharisees have sitted on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not; for they say and do not* (St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3).

A. Mark how He chooses for this important lesson the moment when the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees is at its height. No matter how great the depravity of the delegates whom He has commissioned to teach in His Name, we must hear their teaching, even when we abhor

their evil life. He has nothing but anathemas for their private life; but insists on submission to their teaching. The reason of this distinction is clear. He guarantees their official teaching, but not their private life.

B. *For they say and do not.* Alas! how easy it is to speak fairly and act badly, to teach well and live wickedly, to counsel virtue and practise vice! "Blessed St. James, pray for us that we may, according to thy good teaching, be *doers of the Word*. If you know these things, our Saviour said to His Apostles, *you shall be blessed if you do them* (St. John xiii.). The more I know, the heavier my stripes will be if I do not act according to my knowledge.

"Compassionate Heart of Jesus, grant us grace to be so blessed as to be doers of Thy law."

#### STATION IV.

*For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them* (St. Matt. xxiii. 4).

A. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us according to Thy great mercy, and teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves, or rather, to love them as Thou hast loved us; taking their burdens on ourselves; but never, never laying on them burdens which we know we cannot ourselves bear.

#### STATION V.

*And all their works they do for to be seen of men. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place* (vv. 5, 7).

A. "Attendite." O all you who go by the way, stay a little while to consider the pride and arrogance which Jesus humble of Heart abhors. We must not go away till from His Heart there passes into ours some share of His horror of worldly pride and ostentation.

1. They do all their works to be seen by men.
2. They love the first places at feasts.
3. The first chairs in the synagogues.
4. And salutations in the market-place.

#### STATION VI.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter* (v. 13).

A. Listen to His words, St. Ignatius says, and watch with your eyes His sacred Person, the sorrow of heart which appears in His face for the scandal caused to His little ones by these proud and heartless leaders. We must attend to every word. *Woe to you hypocrites! You shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men. For you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter.*

B. How many points for self-examination are here! O Lord Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, give us grace to go over with Thee our bygone years, to find out how often and in how many ways we have been hypocrites and proud Pharisees.

C. How often we eagerly sought for the first places!

D. How many there are among the living or the dead whom we have hindered from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, or hindered from making progress in sanctity!

E. And we must bear in mind that we scandalise others sometimes by commission, by insulting or provoking them, by bad example, bad advice, bad teaching; sometimes by omission, by not teaching when bound to teach, by not giving good example, by not giving alms much needed, by neglecting vigilance when in office.

F. Observe too how wickedness is always aggressive, seeking to make proselytes. If we enter not the Kingdom of God, we do not like to see others enter. If we do not care to live fervently, we dislike fervour in others because

it reproaches us. *He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different* (Wisdom ii.).

Most merciful Saviour, give us grace to resolve with Zachæus, *If I have wronged any man I give back four-fold.*

## STATION VII.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel* (vv. 23, 24).

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, deliver us from all spiritual delusions, that we may not be satisfied with mere pious practices, while neglecting to be just in our judgments, to be obedient, and to show mercy and fidelity."

## STATION VIII.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness* (v. 25).

"O Jesus, humble of Heart, give us grace to aim at pleasing Thy pure eyes rather than the eyes of men. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and grant me ever to remember that my bone is not hidden from Thee, and in Thy book all shall be written*" (Psalm cxxxviii.).

## STATION IX.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and all filthiness* (v. 27).

"Lord Jesus, by all the ignominy of Thy bitter Death and Passion, deliver us from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

*Let not the oil (the flattery) of the sinner fatten my head* (Psalm cxi.). Grant us to be blamed rather by men and commended by Thee, than to be beautiful in their eyes and foul in Thine."

## STATION X.

*Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers* (v. 32).

The 108th Psalm teaches us that, if we forget to show mercy and persecute the poor, the sins of our parents will be remembered: *May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered in the sight of the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.* The sins of parents will not be visited unjustly on children, but if God, on account of the merciless hardness of the child, is compelled to remember the iniquities of his parents, many graces will be withheld from the child which would have come, if parents by their goodness and almsgiving had won blessings for their children, and so, through his own fault, the child will feel some effects of his parents' sins.

## STATION XI.

*You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of Hell?* (v. 33).

A. Severe and terrible words! But we must bear in mind that on a former occasion, when pouring out more privately in the house of a Pharisee many of these anathemas, the Lord Jesus changed His tone to point out a road to salvation still open to these wicked men. *But yet that which remaineth, give alms; and behold all things are made clean to you* (St. Luke xi.).

Therefore, in the end, their condemnation will be pronounced for their neglect of works of mercy. *I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat* (St. Matt. xxv.).

So with Judas, his terrible doom came upon him *because he remembered not to show mercy* (Psalm cviii.).

## STATION XII.

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate (vv. 37, 38).*

A. Let us listen most attentively to these words of our Blessed Saviour. They are the simple truth. There is no exaggeration. Indeed, they fall far short of the truth. His anxiety to save each of us, to draw us to Himself and gather us, is infinitely beyond the solicitude of the hen striving to gather her chickens under her wings. We must not pass hastily away from this truth. Like our Blessed Lady, we must lay up this word in our hearts. How can we fail in holy hope, if we lay up in our hearts this sentence of our most compassionate Redeemer?

B. And this thought also suggests itself. If the Heart of our Saviour is thus yearning with far more than motherly love for us, how boundless must be His gratitude to any one who helps Him to save even one poor sinner! What would be the feelings of a good mother to him who rescues her child from a raging fire?

C. Throughout eternity, the Priests and Rulers of Jerusalem, if to the end they continued, *like the deaf as that stoppeth her ears*, to resist the calls of Him Who charneth wisely (Psalm lvii.), will have these parting words of our Blessed Lord ringing in their ears, and they will see most clearly how true it was that He laboured to gather them *as the hen doth gather her chickens*. Too late they recognise their wicked insanity, and can only now repeat their everlasting wail: *We fools! the serpent deceived me.*

## STATION XIII.

*For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord (v. 39).*

Our Lord has ended His last public discourse with

that solemn appeal: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* And He now foretells to His enemies that the time is at hand when they shall see Him no more till He comes in glory. Then they also will be compelled to make that profession which they blamed so much last Sunday: *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

Some commentators think that our Saviour is alluding to the conversion of the Jews at the end of the world, when they will join with all Christians in blessing Him, as is foretold by Osee the Prophet (iii. 4): *The children of Israel shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and without theraphim. And after this, the children of Israel shall return, and shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King. And they shall fear the Lord, and His goodness in the last days.*

## STATION XIV.

THE TEMPLE. THE ALMS-BOX. TUESDAY EVENING.

*And Jesus sitting over against the treasury (St. Mark xii. 41).*

A. This day of terrible struggle between the mad pride of men and the meek charity of Jesus is now drawing to a close. The crowd is scattering. The multitudes are making their way to their homes and lodging-houses. The Rulers and Ancients and Priests, confounded and beaten down by the awful words of our Saviour, have gone away hard and impatient, and vowing vengeance. Jesus remains alone. As yesterday He came out hungry from Bethany, so probably this day of heavy conflict has passed without much refreshment for Him. He is sitting now alone and weary opposite the alms-box of the Temple. His disciples have gone away to a little distance. And now the loving care of His Eternal Father provides a little consolation for His sorrowful Heart.

B. "Most loving Lord Jesus, sitting down weary and hungry for my sake, *Tantus labor non sit casus*. May I not cease to contemplate Thy weariness till grace and virtue comes out from Thee to my poor soul!"



## STATION XV.

*And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing (vv. 41, 42.)*

If among the Jews many of the rich cast in much, should Christians when rich do less? Our Lord is now, at the present hour, watching our almsgiving as attentively as He watched them. What does He see? Do we gladden His Heart? or is He afflicted?

## STATION XVI.

*And calling His disciples together, He saith to them: Amen, I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living (vv. 43, 44).*

A. The housewife that found her lost groat called in her neighbours to be glad with her. Our Blessed Saviour calls all His disciples round Him to notice the alms of this poor woman, which gives such consolation to His charitable Heart in this hour of His great need. And so now also, when we do a work of mercy that costs us much, He gathers His saints and angels to see it and share His gladness.

B. Alms, given out of our abundance, are good, but they are only copper alms. Alms given out of money that is not over-abundant or quite superfluous, but still quite sufficient and more than sufficient for our present maintenance, is silver alms. The alms given out of our want is golden alms. Hence, though it seems easier for the rich to give alms than the poor; yet the rich man has to go very far in almsgiving before he gets beyond his superfluities. Too often the rich are unwilling even to give of their abundance. We may apply to alms this sure

rule, that the more self-sacrifice they entail, the more precious they are in God's sight. Hence those who have no silver or gold, but give their toil in the schoolroom, or by the sick-bed, and those who give their tears and fasting and earnest prayer for sinners, may be giving alms much more precious than gold, because they tax self more severely.

## SCENE XIII.

OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE. THE EVENING OF TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

## STATION I.

*And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away (St. Matt. xxiv. 1).*

Our Lord not having where to lay His Head in Jerusalem, is going, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives. "Alas! most loving Lord, how often still art Thou in sore want, and we offer no help!"

## STATION II.

*And as He was going out of the Temple, one of His disciples saith to Him: Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here. And Jesus answering said to him: Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone (St. Mark xiii. 1, 2).*

A. Not a stone upon a stone! What are buildings? what are great cities? what are empires in the sight of God if they cease to serve His purpose? So, too, of great and distinguished men, great conquerors, great statesmen, great orators, famous men of science! *Sine tuo minime, nihil est in homine*—"Without Thy grace, man is nothing, and worse than nothing."

*Giants were on the earth in those days; the mighty men of old, men of renown (Genesis vi.).* How many giants have appeared in every department; gigantic monarchs, giants

in war, giants in intellect, men of gigantic wealth. Where are they all? In some factories, old blocks of patterns gone out of date are stowed away by the thousands. So is it with the natural gifts in Hell. There may be seen in plenty great emperors; there the heroes of a hundred fights on land and sea; there the poets, and the orators, and the great actors, on whose lips the audience hung entranced. There are unrivalled musicians; there are the giants in science, the strong and the beautiful. The 48th Psalm describes their condition: *They are laid in Hell like sheep.*

*Why this waste?* we may ask with far more reason than Judas had. These men, if allowed to come back, could dazzle the world, delight our ears, enlighten our minds, ravish our eyes. Why are they cast aside and wasted? The Holy Ghost gives the answer (Psalm xiii.): *The Lord hath looked down from Heaven on the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside. They are become unprofitable together. There is none that doth good, no, not one.* We know how useless for social life the idiot is who has lost, for the time, the rational life. Even so, in God's eyes, the men who ought to have the supernatural life of faith, hope, and charity, and have it not, are utterly useless, and accordingly are of necessity cast away and forgotten for ever.

B. The words heard by St. John concerning the fall of Babylon apply, many of them, as well to doomed Jerusalem: *Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone, as it were a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying: With such violence as this shall Babylon that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers shall no more be heard at all in thee; and no craftsman of any art shall be found any more at all in thee; and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of the lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice*

*of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for all nations have been deceived by thy enchantments. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth (Apoc. xviii.).*

This, then, is the moral. No city, no empire, however glorious, is necessary unto God. So, too, no man, however gifted, is necessary to God, or even useful, unless he has grace to believe, to hope, and to love.

#### SCENE XIV.

THE SLOPE OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.  
TUESDAY EVENING.

#### STATION I.

*And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away. And as He sat on the Mount of Olivet over against the Temple, Peter, James, and John, and Andrew asked Him apart: Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world? (St. Mark xiii.).*

A. The evening of Tuesday in Holy Week is now come, a day into which so many all-important lessons, so many tremendous warnings, have been crowded. Our Saviour has spoken for the last time to His people in Jerusalem. When next He returns into the city, it will be to enter on His Sacred Passion.

He has, with His disciples, walked down the steep side of Mount Moriah on which the Temple stands. He has crossed the Brook of Cedron, close to the south side of Gethsemani, and having walked a little way up Mount Olivet, is now sitting, with His disciples around Him, on the slope, near the spot where, on Palm Sunday, He wept over the city. Once more His Heart and His eyes are fixed on the sinful city and the desecrated Temple. For Jerusalem is the city of His predilection, His chosen sanctuary, His holy city. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right*

hand be forgotten. *Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee* (Psalm cxxxvi.). Call to mind some of the words which He had inspired His Prophets to speak concerning this favoured spot: *Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?* (Lament. ii.). *Thus saith the Lord God: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations, and the countries round about her* (Ezekiel vi.). The Temple on Mount Moriah was the one chosen house of the Lord, the House of Sacrifice. *My eyes shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place* (2 Paral. vii.). *From Sion the law shall come forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem* (Isaiah ii.). *God is our King before ages. He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth* (Psalm lxxiii.). We find many holy writers speaking of Jerusalem as the centre of the earth. Lastly, in the dying prayer of old Tobias, we read: *Jerusalem, city of God, give glory to the Lord for thy good things, and bless the God Eternal. Thou shalt shine with a glorious light, and all the ends of the earth shall worship thee. Blessed are they that love thee and rejoice in thy peace. Happy shall I be if there shall remain of my seed to see the glory of Jerusalem* (c. xiii.). Our Blessed Lord knows all that He has planned to do for Jerusalem, if only His people would acknowledge Him. Try to enter into the grief of His most loving and disappointed Heart.

And here we must reflect upon ourselves, for He that is mighty has done for us things a thousand times more merciful and more loving than for Jerusalem. How far more intense His disappointment when He is obliged to say to us too: *My people, what have I done to thee?* (Micah vi. 3).

B. Our Blessed Saviour had just been speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. On former occasions, He had spoken of His Second Coming. *The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels* (St. Matt. xvi. 27). His Apostles remember this, and now question Him concerning both events: *Tell us when shall these things be?*

## STATION II.

He answers first: *Take heed that no man seduce you. For many will come in My Name, and they will seduce many. And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you be not troubled. For these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and there shall be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in places. Now all these are the beginnings of sorrows* (St. Matt. xxiv. 4—8).

He here teaches them not to expect the consummation of the world too soon, as His Church has first to pass through a long term of sufferings. These are only the beginnings of sorrows; worse are to follow.

## STATION III.

- (1) *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations.*
- (2) *Then shall many be scandalised, and shall betray one another and hate one another.*
- (3) *And many false prophets shall rise and seduce many.*
- (4) *because iniquity hath aboundeth, the charity of many shall grow cold* (vv. 9—12).

Here are the greater sorrows that are to follow: (1) persecution; (2) many shall be scandalised; (3) false prophets shall seduce many; (4) the charity and fervour of many shall grow cold.

In the midst of these greater sorrows our days are now spent. How have we been affected by them? Have we been at all seduced by false teachers? Have we been scandalised? shaken in our faith? Have we ever turned traitors? Has the chilling atmosphere of Protestantism and worldliness and unbelief caused charity to grow cold within us?

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies*

*blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels (Psalm l.).*

## STATION IV.

*But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved (v. 13).*

*Man's life on earth is a warfare (Job vii.). Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God (Acts xiv.). Holy Church asks God daily to give us some fellowship with the martyrs. We ought not to have much leisure to be solicitous about money or about health or other things that pass with this world; for, One thing is necessary. All our desires and prayers must be that we persevere to the end.*

## STATION V.

*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come (v. 14).*

Has this condition been yet fulfilled? Has the Gospel been preached in the whole world? Do we by prayers and alms help the propagation of the faith through the whole world?

As the Apostles had asked concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and concerning the end of the world, our Lord in His answer says some words that apply to both. Now He speaks for a while about the destruction of Jerusalem.

## STATION VI.

*Then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains. And he that is on the housetop let him not come down to take anything out of his house. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be (vv. 15, 17, 21).*

If, to avoid bodily suffering, we are to be so prompt, and sacrifice home and save ourselves by rapid flight, what ought we to do to save ourselves and our children

from spiritual ruin? We are the children of the men who fled to the Continent, and sacrificed home and lands, and went to prison and to the scaffold, to keep the holy faith for us. *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? (St. Matt. xvi.).*

## STATION VII.

*And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but, for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened (v. 22).*

*For the sake of the elect.* If ten just men could be found in the city, God was ready to spare Sodom. He afterwards, we are told, put a limit to the fury of the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem, for the sake of the few who wished to become disciples of Christ. If we, then, are true to our holy religion, besides saving our own souls, we act as guardian angels to protect others. It is on record that a truly Christian soldier, Albuquerque, when all seemed lost in the middle of a raging storm, lifted a baptised infant in his arms, and besought God by the innocence of that child to save the ship and the crew, and that his prayer was heard.

## STATION VIII.

*Then if any man shall say to you: Lo! here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs (vv. 23, 24).*

Here He warns them that impostors will arise and tell them that the Messias is come to conquer the Romans.

*Behold I have told it to you beforehand.* Alas! in vain; for the multitudes are led astray by false teachers, as if our Lord had never forewarned.

## STATION IX.

This leads Him to speak of His Second Coming, and to teach them that it shall be very sudden and very public.

*For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Whosoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.*

That is, as birds of prey rapidly swoop down and gather round a carcass, so all men will rapidly gather to the spot to which our Lord is come to judge. Happy they who in our present day of privilege gather with hunger and thirst, like birds of prey, around the tabernacle where the body of our Lord now reposes. They will not fear when He comes in His majesty.

## STATION X.

*And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and the stars; men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world (St. Luke xxi. 25). And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn.*

*And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (St. Matt. xxiv. 30).*

A. If we have grace to love the Passion of our Lord now, the Cross will not then overwhelm us with fear.

B. When bound as a prisoner during His Passion, He reminded His judges more than once that He would one day be their Judge. As we contemplate Him become so little and so annihilated in the tabernacle, we must often rouse our faith, and say, *ſuder crederis esse venturus*—"I believe that Thou art my Judge Who is to come".

## STATION XI.

*Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass (St. Matt. xxiv.).*

We must firmly believe every word of our Lord. Before the human race shall pass away, every iota shall be fulfilled.

## STATION XII.

*But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of Heaven, but the Father alone (v. 36).*

So too God does not permit us to know the hour when we shall die and be judged, lest perchance, if we knew that we yet had some years to live, we should live negligently and sin, and in consequence of multiplied sins not have, in the end, grace to repent.

## STATION XIII.

*Watch ye, therefore, because you know not in what hour, your Lord will come (St. Matt. xxiv. 42).*

Our Lord now urges upon all His disciples this great moral.

As the destruction of Jerusalem bore a resemblance to the end of the world, so too for each of us does the day of our death, since for us it is the end of all things here.

*As in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day on which Noe entered into the Ark, and they knew not till the Flood came, and took them all away; so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be (37, 38).*

That is, the day of death will come upon us as a surprise. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth (Apoc. xvi.). Blessed is that servant whom, when the Lord shall come, He shall find so doing (St. Matt. xxiv. 46).

*Watch ye, therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning. Lest coming on a sudden He find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch (St. Mark xiii.).*

If the Heart of our Saviour wished to be severe and to take us by surprise, He would not be at such pains to

impress on us that He will come as a thief. His one anxiety is to move us to live as children of His Heavenly Father ought to live. For, if we are not in a fit state to die, we are not living rightly.

## SCENE XV.

### MOUNT OF OLIVES. WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Where did our Blessed Saviour spend the Wednesday of Holy Week? Some commentators answer that He was teaching in the Temple, as on the two foregoing days. They ground their opinion on the words of St. Luke (c. xxi. 37). *In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple, but at night going out He abode in the Mount that is called Olivet.* These words are found after the account that St. Luke gives of our Lord's discourses, and seem to refer to all the days between the supper at Bethany and the Last Supper. On the other hand, there appear to be reasons for judging that our Saviour on the Wednesday did not go into Jerusalem, but remained either in Bethany or some other part of the Mount of Olives. The strongest of these reasons is that St. Mark, who carefully notes our Lord's movements on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, makes no mention of any return to Jerusalem on Wednesday morning.

We may also here ask where did our Blessed Saviour pass the nights on these first four days of Holy Week? Guided by the words just quoted from St. Luke, *At night He abode on the Mount that is called Olivet*, some interpreters take for granted that He spent these nights in prayer on the Mount of Olives. If He did so, He would only be doing, in these last days, what He had done in the early part of His Public Life. *He spent the whole night in the prayer of God* (St. Luke vi.).

Other commentators, however, bearing in mind that Bethany was situated on the slope of Mount Olivet, understand the words of St. Luke to mean that He passed part of the night at Gethsemani and part at Bethany.

With regard to the day-time, we may follow the opinion of those who, guided by St. Mark, believe that our Blessed Saviour did not go into Jerusalem on Wednesday, but taught His disciples privately on the Mount of Olives.

A third question also occurs. What did He teach them on that day? Where does the discourse of Tuesday break off? Where does the teaching of Wednesday begin? We know nothing for certain. All that He said after leaving Jerusalem on Tuesday evening is given in one unbroken narrative, as if all formed a part of the same discourse delivered while He sat on Mount Olivet that evening.

On the other hand, there is nothing to forbid the supposition that He divided His teaching and reserved some of it for

Wednesday. The Evangelists very frequently make no attempt to fix in chronological order the events or discourses of each day.

Add to this, that on the Tuesday He had taught so much and spoken so often that it would not be surprising if He reserved some of the important lessons He was giving for the day following. As then in St. Matthew's 25th chapter we find parables and lessons, not given by either of the other two Evangelists, who chronicle carefully what happened on the Tuesday, these, for convenience sake, we may detach from the rest, and suppose that they were the instructions given by our Saviour to His disciples on the Wednesday, either in Bethany, or perhaps on the slope of Mount Olivet, where He sat the previous days.

He has around Him the Apostles and other disciples, some of the devout women from Galilee and some of those converted at the grave of Lazarus. It seems also highly probable that our Blessed Lady was there too in that favoured company.

## STATION I.

### THE PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS.

*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be like to ten virgins who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride* (St. Matt. xxv. 1).

*Ten Virgins.* Why ten? Probably, some commentators say, our Lord was following some custom usual at wedding-feasts. Some ancient writers state that at the wedding-feasts in the East five young boys waited on the bridegroom and five bridesmaids on the bride.

*Taking their lamps.* In olden times the weddings were solemnised towards nightfall, and torches were borne before the bridegroom and the bride. In Judea, so we are told, not torches were used, but lamps.

### A. The bridegroom and the bride.

This was St. John's vision. *I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men* (Apoc. xxi.).

The Holy Church of Christ then is His Bride, to whom He says, *All I have is thine* (St. Luke xv.). *All My things are thine, and thine are Mine* (St. John xvii.). For by the Incarnation the Divine and Human Natures are united

in an indissoluble and eternal wedding. And even here on earth our Blessed Saviour shares whatever He can share with His Bride. He gives her His Body and His Blood in the Blessed Eucharist. After this, what wonder if He gives His Blessed Mother to be the Mother of His Church, and shares His own infallibility with His Bride!

B. But it is in Heaven that this wedding union will be complete. Then He will share all that He has with His Bride. After the General Judgment all the children of the Church who have saved their souls will go in to the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. *Sursum corda!* Ponder on the Angel's words to St. John: *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Apoc. xix.).

But meanwhile each of us is called away from the world, as soon as our appointed time is come, that we may take our place in the wedding procession.

## STATION II.

*And few of them were foolish, and few wise. But the few foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the Bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept* (vv. 2—5).

A. *But the Bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept.*

If we knew that we had but a few days to live, we should try to keep ourselves well on the alert, we should not have much time for newspapers, or politics, or plays, as we must mind *the one thing necessary*. But now life seems to us long, though in reality it is so short. The Holy Spirit, Who knows what eternity is, says to us, *Short are the days of man* (Job xiv.), and describes man as *living a short time*. But to us it does not seem so; life appears to be long, and we imagine that we have time in abundance to do all the work given to us, and, over and above, plenty of leisure to spare. A few, such as the holy saints, are persuaded that they want all their time to do well the one

thing necessary; but the great majority of men, and even of Christians, look upon these painstaking saints as men of exaggeration. Their notion is, that if they give a little time morning and evening to the care of their souls, all will go well, and they can thus have very ample leisure for other things.

This is only another way of saying that for a large part of their lives they *slumber and sleep*. They live in a dream, busy about many things, spell-bound by what the Holy Spirit calls the "*fascinatio nugaritatis*"—the *bewitching of trifling* (Wisdom iv.), and not applying their minds earnestly to the one thing necessary, which is "to praise, reverence, and serve God," *for this is all man* (Eccles. xii.). *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Cor. x.).

B. *Five of them were foolish, and having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them.* The French pulpit orator, Massillon, of whom it has been wisely said that he preached an opinion that neither Bourdaloue nor any other good theologian would have uttered, will have us believe that scarcely one out of a large Catholic congregation, assembled on the Sunday for Mass, is to be saved. Our Lord's teaching is not this rigorist Gospel. He makes five at least, out of the ten virgins, wise.

C. *Taking their lamps, they did not take oil with them.*

In Baptism we each receive our lamp. It was lighted by faith; and this light of faith is not a light without warmth, as the electric light is, somewhat incorrectly, said to be; but a light thoroughly mixed and blended with the fire of charity.

While the Bridegroom taries, however, that is, while we are sojourners here in this world, it is our business to keep the fire of charity alight. For this we want our supply of oil. By prayer, by almsgiving, by sacrifices, we have to keep the fire of charity and love burning. If

charity is extinguished, faith becomes a cold and spectral light that profits nothing.

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that by multiplying works of mercy we may keep alive the Divine fire of Christ."

*D. But the wise took oil in their vessels.*

That is to say, our Lord's wise and prudent and faithful servants, though to some extent they too may slumber and sleep, yet always pray enough, and give alms, and multiply works of mercy, and by self-denial make sacrifices enough to keep a supply of the oil of grace in their lamps.

"Attendite." Stay here a little while, and examine carefully: Is my lamp lighted? or is it extinguished? If lighted, have I oil ready to keep it alight? If extinguished, how long has it been so? How soon do I mean to have it lit again with that fire which our Saviour came to cast on the earth and so much longs to see enkindled? In other words, how soon do I mean to seek for a good absolution, that my soul may be raised from death to life?

E. Observe St. Peter's words: *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election* (2 St. Peter i.).

*Make sure your election.* Run no risks. How soon will you confess your sin? Soon, you say. But how soon? To-morrow. But why not to-day? Why not at once? To-morrow! Where will you be spending your to-morrow? The Holy Spirit says: *A king is to-day, and to-morrow he shall die* (Ecclus. x.). To-day you are a king. You have great power and privilege. You can have grace and mercy by only wishing it. To-day, that is now, is your hour. To-morrow is not your hour. To-morrow the king shall die, and all his power and privilege and glory is gone. *For when a man shall die, he shall inherit serpents, and beasts, and worms* (Ecclus. x.). *Man when he shall be dead, and striped, and consumed, I pray you, where is he?* (Job xiv.).

He intended to sign his will to-morrow; but did not live to do it. He intended to alter his will and make it more Christian, more charitable, but he did not do it. Poor dear man! He had fully made up his mind to go to confession. "We promise you solemnly," an Anglican clergyman and his wife said, "to come back in six months to be received into the Church, as soon as ever we have paid some debts. We have already sent our child to a Catholic convent school. We have not a single doubt about the true Church. But my wife insists that I must wait six months in order to earn wherewith to pay our debts." Alas! ere the six months were expired, Eve, who kept her husband back by her persuasion, was called away to the house of her eternity; and the mourners went round about in the street with her coffin (Ecclus. xii.).

*Make thy election sure:* run no risks. "Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death."

STATION III.

*And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him* (v. 6).

A. *At midnight.* For then the first deep sleep has completely mastered weary men. Our Lord wishes us to understand that many men, very many, will be heavily asleep, neither watching nor praying, when death comes, and entirely given up to their dream about the bewitching trifles of this earth, its politics, its news, its scandals.

We must always remember that our loving Redeemer has no wish at all to take us by surprise. If He had, He would not urge us, as earnestly and as often as He does, to watch and be ready: *If the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch.* *Wherefore be ye also ready* (St. Matt. xxiv.). Our Lord's one desire is that we be found ready, not slumbering and sleeping, but watching and expecting the coming of our Master.

*Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be over-*



*charged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life : and that day come upon you suddenly* (St. Luke xxi.).

B. No, we need not wonder, as has been already said, that our God does not let us know how many years we have to live, in order that we may prepare for death before it comes. For, *O, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things !* (Wisdom xii.).

Since surely if we foreknew that we had still forty years to spend on earth, the father of lies would easily persuade many of us to give up thirty-five of them to sensuality, to bitter resentments, to pride. If now, when we are not certain of one day, he so often induces us to put off repentance, how few, how very few, would take the trouble to live chastely and charitably, if they were sure that they had time before them ! They would live in sin for twenty, thirty, forty years, under the idea that they can easily repent in the last five years of life. But who has promised them grace after twenty, thirty, or forty years of sin ? Sin is death. Each sin multiplies, if we may so say, death and all the corruption of the grave. After twenty years of sin, the soul is nothing but a mass of corrupt and putrid death. Death is intensified a thousand times. Can we, at any moment we please, raise ourselves to life out of such a death ? Only the Divine voice can say the word, *Lazarus, come forth !* Our God promises to forgive if we repent ; but He nowhere has promised to give us grace to repent to-morrow, or twenty years hence, if we harden our hearts and refuse to hear His voice to-day.

#### STATION IV.

*Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise : Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered saying : Last perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves* (vv. 7, 8, 9).

A. "Waste not, want not," we say. Careful people

have a place for bits of cord and packing-paper, for their scissors and their knife, and in the hour of need they know where to find what they want. The careless and slothful, who are too lazy to keep their things in order, when the hour of need comes expect the painstaking to supply their want. "Lend me your scissors : Lend me a knife : Lend me a sovereign to pay this bill !"

B. So too in the spiritual life, there are those among the faithful who seem to think that if they say from time to time to the fervent : "Will you pray for me ?" "Be sure you pray for me." "Now, won't you pray for me ?" "Mind you do," they have fulfilled all justice.

C. And when they fall sick, and become nervous, they are very anxious to have the whole Church stirred up to a Catholic or universal crusade on their behalf. Will you write to Lourdes ? and to Rimini ? and to Our Lady of Pompeii ? and to the Curé d'Als ? and to the Poor Clares ? I have great faith in them and also in the Carmelites ! and will you pray to Father de la Colombière ? and to all whom we are trying to get canonised ? For it is their interest to help me. Will you pray to the holy souls ? I have such confidence in their prayers ! But—how are we to contrive to rouse up the whole Church Militant and Triumphant to join in this great effort on your behalf ? What signal services have you rendered to all Christendom to entitle you to universal sympathy ? What special plea can we advance for you ?

The Gospel truth is that you must save your own soul.

You must yourself labour by good works to make your election sure. No one else can work out your salvation.

If a man abound in works of mercy, and by much almsgiving earns mercy for himself, then the good angels take care to inspire many holy souls to pray for such a one in his hour of need, and thus, to every one that hath shall be given and he shall abound (St. Matt. xxv.). The charitable, who have in life helped many, find many friends when they are dying ; and the prayers of so many secure for them special

graces and shorten their Purgatory much. Nay, our Lord Himself undertakes to help such a one on his bed of sorrow (and to turn) *all his couch in his sickness* (Psalm xl.). But the careless, the slothful, the selfish, are quite mistaken when they imagine that they can suddenly, on their sick-beds, fill the whole of Christendom with a burning zeal for their souls. It cannot be done.

*D. Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

If we want grace, we must go to Holy Mass, say our Rosary, give alms, pray earnestly for those who have—as we imagine—wronged us, and for those whom we ourselves—as we know full well—have wronged. We must be good to the Holy Souls, and pray for them much more than to them.

#### STATION V.

*Now whilst they went to buy, the Bridgroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last come also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answering, said: Amen, I say to you, I know you not (vv. 10—12).*

A. The lesson here taught is, that when the summons of death is come, we have no more time to do all those good works which are necessary to win the grace we want.

How can we at that time be instructed in order to enter the Church? How prepare well for a long confession? How go to Mass? What is the use of telling us to make acts of contrition then if we don't know how? Have you no easier, no practical method to meet such cases as ours? We are in too much pain to pray. You tire us and bore us by preaching to us. Pray leave us alone. Alas! they die as they live. And as death is, so is judgment.

*B. Lord, Lord, open to us. It is too late, too late. I know you not.*

*My son, our Lord says to us most earnestly, if thou wilt receive My words, and wilt hide My commandments with thee; if thou shalt call for wisdom and incline thy heart to prudence;*

*if thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as a treasure; then shalt thou find the knowledge of God (Prov. ii.).*

*Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded; you have despised all My counsel, and have neglected My reproofs; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you: then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me. Because they have hated instruction, and receive not the fear of the Lord; nor consented to My counsel, but despised all My reproof. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them (Prov. i.).*

*C. Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear.*

If such men pray on their death-beds, it is oftentimes a short, unmeaning prayer, devoid of that earnestness that is necessary to do violence to Heaven.

*D. They shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me.* At death men suddenly awake from their dream, and are like men rising in the morning. Alas! what an awaking! what a rising! if we find not our Lord waiting for us with a welcome!

*E. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* Ezechiel gives this account of the wickedness and ruin of Sodom: *Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom, thy sister, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her and her daughters: and they did not put forth their hand to the needy and to the poor (c. xvi.).*

*"Attendite."* Let us reflect long and earnestly on our own state.

#### STATION VI.

*Watch ye therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour (v. 13).*

This is the earnest petition of our Lord's loving Heart to us: "Watch and be ready. I purposely keep

the hour hidden from you, because I love you, and wish you always to be ready, always to be holy, always to be faithful to Me, never to be for one instant the wicked dupes and slaves of the father of lies."

#### STATION VII.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

*For even as a man going into a far country called his servants, and delivered to them his goods (v. 14).*

Our Father retires, as it were, from the world. *The earth He hath given to the children of men (Psalm cxiii.).* He makes over the earth, and all His goods here, to each of us as to an eldest son; but at the same time we are to be His stewards, to use everything according to His intention, and at the end to render an account of our stewardship.

#### STATION VIII.

*And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey (v. 15).*

To one five talents, to another two, according to his *proper ability (proprium virtutum)*. This does not mean that one, because he has more intellect or some better natural gifts, *merits* a larger share of grace. Grace is a free gift, not merited by any natural qualities. As gifts of nature differ, and one has more and another less, so God gives greater graces to one than to another, and destines one to a higher place in Heaven than another. But the measure of grace offered to every one of us is so great that we need not be envious of others. We do not arrive even near to the heights where God wishes to place us.

#### STATION IX.

*And he that had received five talents went his way and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner, he that received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way, digged into the earth, and*

hid his lord's money. But after a long time, the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

And he also who had received the two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliverdest two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two. His lord said to him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

But he that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know that thou art a hard man. Thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; behold, here thou hast what is thine. And his lord, answering, said to him: Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed. Thou oughtest, therefore, to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (vv. 16—30).

A. This parable in many of its details resembles the Parable of the Pounds which our Blessed Saviour spoke when leaving Jericho last week. There is, however, one main point of difference, that there He laid stress on the fact that the subjects of the King, or Lord, did not wish

him to reign over them, and were therefore exterminated ; for He wished to impress on the people around Him in Jericho the coming fate of the stiff-necked Jews.

But in this present parable He addresses Himself more to each of us individually.

B. We are not to conclude that only those who receive one talent bury and waste their gifts. A man who receives ten may bury and waste them all. On the other hand, he who receives one may traffic wisely and win many more.

C. The talents are (1) gifts of grace, faith, hope, charity, chastity, humility, vocation, and other actual graces ; (2) natural gifts, good judgment, good health, eloquence, skill, talent for painting or music, literary gifts, etc. ; (3) external helps, such as being thrown among faithful and fervent companions, being under the care of holy parents or zealous priests, having good books to read, etc.

D. The orchard scattered with blossoms after unseasonable gales is a picture of wasted graces.

Do we reflect on the value of every grace ?

1. It is a gift from our Father in Heaven. Is any gift from Him small ?

A soldier who had lost his arm in battle told the first Napoleon that he would willingly lose the other, if so he might receive the cross from the hand of his Emperor. The family would treasure such a cross as an heirloom. A grace comes to us from the hand and from the Heart of our own God.

2. A grace is a seed out of which grows the tree of life. Is it to be wasted ?

3. Every grace is won for us at a great price, the Blood of our Saviour. Is grace so dearly bought to be wasted ?

E. When grace is once given, it is not left to our discretion to use it or not, we are servants and bound to traffic for our Master.

St. Paul writes, *If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me ; for a necessity lieth upon me ; for woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel* (1 Cor. ix. 16).

F. If our Lord gives me a call or vocation, and I harden my heart, what a loss of graces to myself and others may ensue ! Who can count the graces that necessarily follow in the wake of a good vocation ?

G. The late Cardinal Wiseman used to say that he thought he had cultivated and improved every natural talent he had received from God except the musical talent.

Are we improving natural gifts in order to serve God with them ? What weight and influence a good Catholic can exercise if he is thoroughly well educated and stands high in his profession !

What a power the rich man has for good, if along with riches he has a lively faith and warm charity !

St. Ignatius and other saints saw clearly how important it is in these latter days that Christ's servants should carefully cultivate their natural gifts, in order to cope with His adversaries.

H. Call to mind with sorrow the hours and days wasted by so many, as if time were a worthless weed, and not one of God's good gifts.

I. What would those whose day on earth is over, now give if they might have back even a few of their wasted hours in which to traffic diligently ?

J. Each moment of time, if used fervently, can win a higher place in Heaven for ourselves, besides much grace for others also.

K. Alas ! with what vehement desire the Holy Souls in Purgatory long that we would not waste the precious moments in which we can so easily procure refreshment and release for them !

L. In every moment, we can be offering to our Lord Jesus that inestimable jewel which He prizes so ineffably, an act of love from our hearts : *My son, give me thy heart* (Prov. xxiii.). "*Delectare in Domino*"—*I take delight in the Lord* (Psalm xxxvi.).

M. *I know that Thou art a hard man.*

Let us most heartily reject and detest this thought.

*Think of the Lord in goodness, the Holy Ghost says to us. (Wisdom i.); and let us do our best to move others to think of God in goodness. Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.*

*Fac cor amans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.*

*N. Thou art a hard man.*

Remember how all the blessed in Heaven, all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and all the faithful on earth are united in an earnest prayer, *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name*; that is, may all men believe that Thou art a good Father and cherish Thy name of Father.

Let us collect together from Holy Writ better thoughts concerning our Father, and our Lord Jesus, our loving Saviour; such as the words of Jonas (c. iv.): *I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion and easy to forgive evil*; and the Psalmist's words: *Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call on Thee* (Psalm lxxxv.).

Every one of these words we should shut up in our hearts, and feed our souls with them till at last our minds and hearts have thoroughly adopted the idea of our God which they contain.

O. So must we also bear in mind and meditate long on the fact, that of all His names and titles our Blessed Lord loves best His name of Jesus, Saviour. All who now say in their hearts that Jesus is an austere man, will, unless conversion comes, fruitlessly repeat for ever and for ever their hopeless lament: *The serpent deceived me.*

P. At the same time, we must bear in mind that even if our God appears at times to be severe, He is our Master, and we are not only His children, but His servants also, and the work of His hands; so that, as He reminds us, He has, at the very least, the same rights over us that the potter has over his clay (Jerem. xviii.). Much more right in reality, for the potter has not created the clay which he fashions; but God has created us out of nothing.

When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He wished to teach the lesson that He is Supreme Lord and Master. When our Lord at twelve years remained in the Temple, without saying a word to His Blessed Mother or St. Joseph, He wished to impress on us that though through life He voluntarily and most cordially subjected Himself to His Holy Mother and His foster-father, yet He is always Supreme, and can at any moment suspend the ordinary laws to which He has subjected Himself. So too again when He said to the man in Samaria, *follow Me*, and the man answered, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father*, this petition would have been, ordinarily, most reasonable and one that our Lord would commend; but He wanted us to understand that He is Lord and Master, and when He gives a special call, His word is above all ordinary laws; and He therefore said, *Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God* (St. Luke ix.).

Q. *The unprofitable servant cast ye out into exterior darkness.*

The exterior darkness means the dark prison which is outside, and far away from, the bright home of our Father in Heaven.

#### STATION X.

##### THE JUDGMENT.

*And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him* (vv. 31, 32).

A poor Catholic woman sitting on a doorstep when a very magnificent royal procession was passing, said, as she raised her eyes to heaven, "What will it be when the Lord of Glory comes?" St. Ignatius, standing on the roof of his house in Rome, used to look up at night to the sky and say: "How poor and mean this earth becomes to me when I look up to heaven!" Who will remember earthly pageants when the Lord comes in His majesty?

## STATION XI.

*And He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left* (vv. 32, 33).

A. This will be the last, the real, the eternal separation. Bitter tears are often shed when death comes to take one and leave another. The unhappy King Agag, when the sword was drawn to slay him, said, in great anguish: *Doth bitter death separate in this way?* (1 Kings xv.). And to the man who *hath now peace in his possessions* (Ecclus. xli.), and no hope of a better world to come, death seems separation and destruction and ruin unspeakable. But with our Lord and His Church death is but a sleep. It need not make any everlasting separation. *Lazarus sleepeth*, our Saviour said, *your brother shall rise again*. But once separated at the Judgment Seat, the parting is for ever. No communion, no sympathy, no friendship, no relationship, no tie of any kind for evermore between those on the right and those on the left, the blessed and the cursed.

*Preces mee non sunt dignæ,  
Sed Tu bonus fac benigne,  
Ne petenti cremer igne.*      Though all unworthy is my cry,  
Yet save me, Jesus, when I die,  
From fires that burn eternally.

*Inter oves locum præsta,  
Et ab hædis me sequestra.*      Oh, keep for me, Good Shepherd, keep,  
A place among Thy own blest sheep.  
Nor cast me down to wail and weep

For ever in those dungeons deep.

## STATION XII.

THE JUDGMENT. GENERAL AND PARTICULAR. PART I.

*Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me* (vv. 34—36).

We may also apply these words to the Particular Judgment after death.

*A. I was hungry.*

From these words it appears as if there was to be no searching into our lives on earth. All seems to turn on one point—works of mercy. Is this so?

By His Prophet Sophonias (c. i.) the Lord says: *It shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and will visit on the men that are settled on their lees*. It is quite certain, then, that when men die, *their works follow them* (Apoc. xiv.). Past thoughts, words long ago forgotten, and bygone deeds—none of all these things have really passed away. The recording angels watch and note and preserve them all; and they shall all appear again at the Judgment. If our eyes were opened, we should see as we eat and drink and buy and sell, what Baltassar saw, a hand writing on the wall every word of ours, every thought, every deed. Each one of them is weighed and valued, and its worth or worthlessness is carefully registered and kept. Every act and every omission, with the intention that led us to act or omit, is most faithfully photographed and kept for the reckoning-day.

For the Lord is true and faithful, and so are His angels.

*I will visit on the men that are settled on their lees*. If the cask of wine is long undisturbed, the lees settle at the bottom of the cask. Men who ignore, or entirely neglect the duty of confession become like casks of old wine long undisturbed. There is a great deposit of filth at the bottom of the cask. God forewarns us all that *He will visit on the men that are settled on their lees*. There will be a terrible stirring up of all the filth and iniquity accumulated during the years gone by.

*I will search Jerusalem with lamps.*

What will these lamps be?

1. The Gospel of Christ will be a lamp; and the Ten Commandments will be lamps. During this life *Thy Word, O Lord, ought to be a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths*

(Psaln cxviii.). But at the Great Tribunal, the Commandments, and the Gospel, and all the words of our Lord, will be shining lamps, directed upon our inmost soul, and it will appear at once whether we have or have not walked in conformity with our Lord's Gospel and His Commandments.

2. "Man," St Ignatius says in the opening of his Exercises, "was created to *praise God, to reverence Him, and to serve Him.*"

*Praise, reverence, service*: here are again three lamps which will be employed to search Jerusalem. Have our days and our nights been made up of *praise, reverence, and service* of our God, our Creator, our Redeemer?

3. "All other things," he goes on, "were created for man, and to help him to gain his end. Therefore man is bound to use creatures honestly and rightly as a trust: that is, to use them so far as they are a help to him, and to disentangle himself from them if they prove a hindrance."

Every creature that I have used—my time, my money, my books, my food, my dress, my senses, my intellect, the earth, the air, the stars, the sunlight, the night, the day; and in the spiritual world, our Lord in the tabernacle, the Holy Mass, the sacraments, the power of prayer, the holy teaching vouchsafed to me, the good example of those around me—all these things, and many more, will be witnesses to testify concerning me whether I have been a faithful steward and used creatures honestly. They will all be lamps that will bring to light the good and the evil in my career.

Then all my neighbours, too, the men and women with whom I spent my days, will have to bear witness. I was created to help them to salvation. They were created to help me. I had a power to become partner with all who feared God, and to have fellowship and communion with all their good works. I had also a power to become an accomplice in the ill-doing of others by approving, by counselling, by provoking, by neglecting to do my duty to them, and through failing to hinder their sins by correction and careful training.

Those with whom I have lived, therefore, will all be lamps to throw their light on my life. They will all witness concerning me, and the voice of the people will be the voice of God.

Then the office which each man has undertaken to perform will act as a lamp to show what his life has been. Has the father been really a father? Has the physician fitted himself for his work? Has the priest been faithful at the altar, in the pulpit, in the confessional, at the sick-bed, in the poor-school?

B. This full and complete examination will not require time. In St. Paul's language, it will be completed in *a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* (1 Cor. xv.). How so? Because God has been with me, not only as a witness of every deed and word and thought, but as my servant, helping me to walk, to lift my hand, to speak, to think, to pray. For never for one instant can I walk alone, or act, or speak, or think, without help from my Creator. In fact, by preserving me in my being, He is virtually creating me every instant.

Since then God has ever to be with us, helping us in every act, it follows, that by creating us such as we are, with a free-will, He binds Himself, so long as we live, to be our servant, and to give—though most unwillingly—a certain measure of help, even when we sin. If a man walks along the street to steal, God must help him to walk. If he moves his tongue to curse, God is as a sorrowful servant helping him whilst he utters the curse. For during the present short time God is the servant and man the master. How pathetically does our God contrast our serving of Him with His serving of us. *This people have I formed for Myself, but thou hast not called on Me, neither hast thou laboured about Me; I have not caused thee to serve with oblations, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money; but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities* [Isaiah xliii.].

Oh, may our eyes be opened to see something of the dishonour to which we subject our God when we thus compel Him to serve us in our sins, and weary Him with our iniquities!

Monster tyrants have sometimes tied the living to the dead. Who can conceive how much our good and holy and loving God is inwardly touched with sorrow of heart (Genesis vi.) when obliged to live in such union and contact with the sinner—serving us in our sins, wearied with our iniquities? What wonder that He says, *I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth?* (Apoc. iii.). The wonder of wonders is that He has not long ago done so. "*Miseror-die Domini quia non sumus consumpti*" (Lament. iii.). It is owing to the mercy of our Lord, His meekness, His patience, His longsuffering, that we are not long ago consumed.

The Lord our God then needs no long time to search. All our iniquity is deeply impressed upon Him, and fully before His eyes.

### STATION XIII.

#### THE JUDGMENT. PART II.

A. But there is another side to this Judgment scene. We find it suggested in the familiar words of the 129th Psalm: *If Thou shalt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall stand it?* For those words imply that sometimes our Lord chooses not to observe our iniquities. Thus it was that after lamenting his lot upon his sick-bed, King Ezechias at last, filled with hope, exclaimed, *But Thou hast delivered my soul, O Lord, Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.* That is, "Thou wilt not observe them any more". The Devil will be at the judgment-seat to accuse the brethren. He is there to accuse night and day (Apoc. xii.). He is essentially the accuser, the calumniator, trying to make the worst of every sin, but oftentimes our Guardian Angels are able to say with gladness unspeakable, *The accuser of our brethren is cast forth who accused them before God day*

and night. Our Saviour's sole answer to the accuser in these cases is, *Satan, accuser!* He does not choose to observe the iniquities set forth by the wicked Angel. Why is this? Because He has bound Himself by a most sacred compact: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.* "*Œcaravi Dominus et non penitebit eum*" (Ps. cix.). To this solemn covenant the Lord hath sworn, and never will He repent His promise. If men have been duly merciful, their sins He never will observe. But, on the other hand, *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy* (St. James ii.). To such a one the lamps will be applied rigorously. Every sin will be observed, and weighed, and measured. But, on the other hand, for those who have been duly merciful there is to be nothing but mercy.

B. This truth is in Holy Writ repeated again and again in many different forms, in order that our attention may be drawn to it.

*Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.*

*Alms shall be a great confidence before the Most High God, to all them that give it* (Tobias iv.).

Observe this wonderful promise: *Alms will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.* As if it were impossible for one who does his duty well in works of mercy to be lost.

Are we to believe then that men can sin, and die in sin, and still be saved, because they give alms? *Abst!* Heaven forbid the thought! But we find in Ecclesiasticus the right interpretation of Tobias' words: *For from the merciful all these things* (habits of vice) *shall be taken away, and they shall not wallow in sins* (Eccclus. xxiii.). If then a man die in sin, he shall be condemned. But if he has been rightly merciful, he will not die in sin. *For all these things shall be taken away, and he will not wallow in sins.* He will have grace given to him during life to live innocently, or, if he has sinned, to break his chains, to make a good confession, and to reform his life. *Alms deliver from all sin.*

C. This doctrine is rendered more clear by another word



of Ecclesiasticus: *Water quenqueth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins* (c. iii.).

Alms, we here learn, has a power against sin such as water has against fire. One or two small alms that cost us little, may not suffice; just as one or two pails of water may not extinguish a flaming fire; but if we pour water enough, water at last prevails over fire.

And so if we continue doing works of mercy, they will, sooner or later, according to the measure of our mercy, win us grace to conquer sin, to confess past sins, to obtain a good absolution, and to resist future temptations.

D. Hence it is that we find Daniel saying to that gigantic sinner, King Nabuchodonosor, *Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable to thee; and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor; perhaps He will forgive thy offences* (c. iv.). And our Blessed Saviour's words to those arch-sinners the Pharisees are still stronger. For Daniel says, *perhaps forgiveness will come; but our Lord, while uttering "woe" upon "woe" against those apostles of Hell who are scandalising the whole people, says, without a "perhaps," But yet that which remaineth, give alms, and behold all things are clean to you* (St. Luke xi.).

E. No words, however, can be stronger on this subject than those we are now considering, our Blessed Saviour's parting words on Mount Olivet. *Come, ye blessed, for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. Depart from Me, you cursed, for I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink* (St. Matt. xxv.).

The one cause here specified for the blessing is: "When I was hungry you gave Me to eat". That is to say, because you were merciful you shall find mercy. You may have committed sins, but you received grace to be contrite, and now I can cast your sins behind My back. Your mercy and your almsgiving therefore have saved you.

And when, on the other hand, He says, *Depart, you cursed, because I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat*, the meaning is this: It is not your sins of commission that

are the real and final cause of your ruin. For others have sinned, and yet are saved, because they were willing to redeem their sins with alms. They won mercy after sinning, by being merciful. You sinned, and might also have obtained mercy by being merciful, but you deliberately chose *not* to be merciful. You would *not* give alms that all might be made clean to you. The Holy Spirit tells us how at the judgment-seat the wicked will be astounded at seeing that those who had been sinners like themselves receive mercy. *They shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation* (Wisdom v.); and with anguish unspeakable will cry out, "We too could have had mercy, but the serpent deceived us".

Even more than our commissions we have to dread our omissions of acts of mercy.

#### STATION XIV.

*Then shall the just answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee? thirsty, and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and covered Thee? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee? And the King answering, shall say, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me* (vv. 37—40).

A. When we are in fear here below, we often picture to ourselves coming evils; and our anticipation is worse than the realities. Sometimes, on the other hand, fervent souls in their meditations imagine themselves going through martyrdom, or doing heroic things from which when the realities come, they shrink with horror; and thus they prove the truth of our Lord's words, *The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak*.

The words of our Saviour which we are considering show how widely different the realities of the Judgment will be from our conception of it here. What text do

we so often hear impressed upon us as the familiar one that what we do to Christ's little ones we do to Him? And yet we see here that when the Judgment is actually come and when our Saviour says to the just, *You gave Me to drink, you gave Me to eat*, they are quite taken by surprise, they are lost in amazement. The words are as novel and startling as if they had never been heard before. We sometimes try to realise some of the terrors of the Judgment; the severe account to be rendered, the hideous aspect of our sins in that hour. But can we, on the other hand, form any conception of the extent to which our souls will be confounded and overwhelmed, and, I may say, crushed with a joy and delight which, by all rights, ought to be quite insupportable, when we suddenly see the boundless gratitude with which our Saviour magnifies the little things done by us for Him, and generously rewards services which to ourselves appear so poor and mean and unworthy and insignificant?

B. With what an ineffable sense of relief and consolation and loving gratitude the holy soul that has heard this welcome from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, *Come ye blessed, for I was naked and you covered Me*, will fly away to hide itself in Purgatory till the last farthing due to His infinite goodness is paid!

C. Theologians tell us that at the judgment-seat the soul in the state of grace no sooner sees the loveliness of Christ Jesus than it at once elicits an act of contrition so intense, that all venial sins of every kind are forgiven. Consequently, the faithful in Purgatory are all holy saints quite free from all sin, though still bound to pay the debt of penalty due.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This teaching of theologians may explain an opinion of Father de Lugo, S.J., who though he holds with Father Suarez that an adult who receives Baptism with an attachment to a venial sin cannot have that sin remitted until he repents of it, yet he also agrees with the general persuasion of the faithful that such a one if he died immediately after Baptism would go straight to Heaven without Purgatory. The two opinions seem to clash, but they will be in harmony if we say that this newly baptised soul elicits an act of contrition at the judgment-seat which cleans away the sin. For then, as Baptism does away with all penalty, there will be no Purgatory.

## STATION XV.

*Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat: I was thirsty and you gave Me not to drink: I was a stranger and you took Me not in: naked, and you covered Me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? Then He shall answer them, saying: Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, you did it not to Me (vv. 41—45).*

A. *When did we see Thee hungry?* The wicked are even more astounded than the good when they hear from the lips of the Judge these words: *I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat*. For during life they gave much less heed to Gospel truths than the just did. The revelation at the judgment-seat to them is such that the Holy Spirit describes them as *troubled with terrible fear, and groaning for anguish of spirit* (Wisdom v.).

And whereas the elect are overpowered with the most affectionate surprise when they see our Lord's eyes of mercy turned on them and hear Him say, *I was sick and you visited Me*, sinners on the contrary are filled with the spirit of despairing malice, and they blaspheme, and ask with defiance, "*When did we see Thee sick?*" It is all false, it is all calumny. We never did see Thee sick." To this also our Saviour, with infinite sorrow of Heart, will give the unanswerable explanation: *As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me*.

B. Alas! alas! Lucifer keeps men busy with disputes about the Real Presence, the Infallibility of the Pope, and the rest. We want all our time and more to gain a firm belief of this fundamental truth that our Lord so loves each of us, and so entirely identifies Himself with

each of us, that He says with perfect truth, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*

C. *Depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Therefore Hell is intended by God only for Lucifer and the rebel angels; and no man enters thither who has not by his own choice become the subject and slave and possession of Lucifer. These words bring out in a very strong light the great truth which we too much forget, that when we yield to temptation and sin, we not only choose a creature, and a little pleasure before God, but we deliberately renounce Christ Jesus and go over to His bitter enemy, Lucifer, and give ourselves to him.

D. *Depart into everlasting fire.* Three hundred years ago, the then strong-minded men, as they considered themselves, ridiculed the notion of a Purgatory, but had nothing to say against Hell. In our nineteenth century those who consider themselves too clever and intellectual to become little children in order to learn from God, highly approve of Purgatory, at least of a Purgatory remodelled on their plans, but declare Hell to be an outrage to their little minds, and heartless hearts.

E. It is well to bear in mind that even when the doctrine of eternal punishment is believed, it too often proves not strong enough to deter men from indulging their passions and selling themselves to Lucifer. In what state then would the world be if the fear of Hell were removed?

F. Then again men who exclaim against eternal punishment often represent sin as a momentary act that is past and gone, and yet remembered and chastised for ever by a God Whom we are taught to believe a God infinitely good.

But is it true that sin is a momentary act past and gone?

The sin of Lucifer is to-day as present, as living, as active, as mischievous, as murderous, as truly diabolic, as it was in the first hour. Suicide seems to be a momentary act, but the death it produces is not momentary. For the absence of life and the corruption go on. Can we say, "Oh, it was the foolish act of a moment, by-gones must be

by-gones," and at once reinstate the decaying corpse in its former position in our home?

Impossible! For death and corruption are not a by-gone thing, but a state enduring still. So is it with the sin of the lost soul.

G. If a fallen angel had repented of sin and was still chastised, we might have some grounds for saying that there seems to be unintelligible vindictiveness in God. But when we see that Lucifer and his accomplices are as determined in their hatred of God our Lord, and of man the image of God, as they were in the beginning, what wonder that Hell goes on? If a sin deserves even half an hour of chastisement, it still deserves the half-hour as long as it continues. So long as the sin lasts, the chastisement must last. It is said that there is somewhere in the "Lives of the Saints" a record of a vision in which a Saint heard our Saviour saying to Lucifer: "You know, Lucifer, that if you had repented you would have found mercy". And the answer was, "Never, never will I repent".

H. Here then is the mystery—how does sin endure? The Psalmist answers with this unanswerable question: "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"—*Who understands sins?* (Psalm xviii.). We see a man of fourscore years and more, with already one foot, as we say, in the grave. We conjure him to make his peace with God, to break away from some vicious attachment, to forgive an enemy, to restore ill-gotten goods. He turns away and will hear nothing; and, as far as we can judge, if he lived eight thousand years his obduracy would live on. Who can explain his sin? "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"

Let the strong minds and wise heads find out some plan for putting an end to sin, and we may be sure that Hell will cease as soon as sin is no more.

I. A loving father, if forced to shut up in prison a son bent on murdering his brother or sister, might forgive and reinstate him as soon as he was thoroughly repentant; but if his father knows that the imprisoned son is still as much as

ever intent on murder will he set him free and reinstate him? Never.

J. If Hell's gates were in this hour thrown open, and all those confined there were set at liberty, they would all rather a thousand times remain there than be forced to go and keep companionship with God and His Saints. When the possessed men met Jesus on the shores of Tiberias, the devils cried out through their mouths: *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?* (St. Matt. viii.). The presence of Christ is the worst of torments to Lucifer. The holiness of Heaven would be infinitely more intolerable to the damned than the sufferings of Hell are. Never would they approach Heaven unless they could vent their fury on God and on all who love Him.

K. *I was hungry and you did not give Me to eat. No wonder that all lost souls weep and wail and say, We fools, the serpent deceived me, when they see now quite clearly how easily and how pleasantly they might have won mercy by giving alms and doing mercy. But, some one will say, "Then the rich have a most unfair privilege, for they can give alms, but I cannot".*

St. Peter answers: *Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give to thee* (Acts iii.). We may not have gold and silver, but we can give kind words, and the help of our hands, and our earnest prayers, and our tears, and our fasting and penance. And thus while the rich man is only giving out of his superfluity, we are giving, out of our necessity, alms that cost us much more, and are therefore much more agreeable to our Lord.

#### STATION XVI.

*And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting* (v. 46).

"In the Day of Judgment, deliver us, O Lord."

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

These are the closing words of our Lord's discourses. The same Divine lips pronounce both words: *everlasting punishment; everlasting life.* One is as certain as the other. We have the same warrant for both.

#### SCENE XVI.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

#### STATION I.

*And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended all these words, He said to His disciples: You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified* (St. Matt. xxvi. 1-2).

A. Before entering Jericho, our Blessed Lord foretold all the chief details of the Passion to the Twelve; but, as we read, they understood nothing. Now He once more reveals His awful secret, and probably with something of the same result. They do not realise what is coming so soon.

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour thus isolated and lonely, carrying about in His Heart this terrible future, and unable to find among His followers one who can enter into His thoughts and sympathise with Him! His Blessed Mother alone can share with Him, but she by sharing with all her Mother's love only doubles His agony.

Many complain of loneliness. How unbounderedly grateful the lonely Heart of our Lord would be if they would give up some of those solitary hours, which are a burden to them, to companionship with Him! For *His delights are to be with the children of men.* How glad He is when we have some little desire to be with Him; yes, some little desire, because He is beyond all precedent or example acquainted and familiar with neglect. *My Heart,* He says, *hath expected misery* (Psalm lxxviii.). He is, therefore, grateful with an everlasting gratitude whenever He meets with a little sympathy from us.

*After two days.*

Did our Lord speak these words on Tuesday evening or on Wednesday?

The Jews, as we know, reckoned the festival from sunset to sunset. If we follow this mode of reckoning, two days before the Pasch which is to be eaten on Thursday, would be Tuesday evening.

But some careful and learned students of Holy Scripture tell us that it is all but certain that as we sometimes reckon from midnight to midnight, and sometimes when we speak of a festival-day mean by the word only from dawn to sunset, so among the Jews, in their common parlance, the Pasch was sometimes spoken of as lasting from sunset to sunset; at other times they calculated, as we do, from midnight to midnight; and sometimes also they spoke of the Pasch or the day of the Pasch, as we might do, meaning from daybreak to sunset. If this be correct, our Blessed Saviour might say on Wednesday that the Pasch (Good Friday) would be after two days, and that on that day He would be delivered up to be crucified. Or again, if the Resurrection on Sunday morning can be said to be on the third day, the paschal supper might be said to be after two days, even if He were speaking on Wednesday.

## SCENE XVII.

THE HIGH PRIEST'S PALACE. WEDNESDAY.

STATION I.

*Now the feast of the Pasch and of the Azymes was after two days (St. Mark xiv. 1).*

*Then were gathered together the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people into the Court of the High Priest, who was called Caiphas; and they consulted together that by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus, and put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvi. 3, 4).*

A. What a terrible lesson we draw from the constant unflinching perseverance of these wretched dupes of Satan, that God at last, when the hour of mercy is past, gives way to the obdurate will of the sinner! *God gave them up to the desires of their heart* (Romans i.).

"*Ne in furore tuo arguas me* (Psalm vi.). Do not, O God, my Creator, chastise me in Thy wrath. Do not give me up to the thoughts and desires of my corrupt heart."

B. We see how they are walking through hard ways, and weary themselves in the way of iniquity (Wisdom v.). If we work for Jesus Christ as they work for their master, Satan, we shall be saints.

C. *That by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus.*

Ever since our Saviour began to draw the people to Him by His preaching and miracles, these jealous men have been plotting against His life, and many times they have made a determined effort to get Him into their power and to make away with Him by stoning or some other form of murder. In vain our Saviour expostulates with them and says: *Many good works I have shown to you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me?* (St. John x.). He has always failed to soften them. And, as we have seen, the raising of Lazarus doubled and trebled their mad envy. From that day they have been labouring with untiring activity to procure His death. We have seen how the whole of yesterday they were bringing forward their ablest men from all the different sects of Jerusalem to catch Him in His speech, that they might give Him up to the Roman Governor. They failed utterly. His hour was not come.

But here they are again to-day—maddened more than ever by the victories our Lord won yesterday—with that persevering will which our Blessed Saviour so much wishes to find in His own followers, holding a Council, and meditating *vain things against the Lord and against His Christ*. And now they can think of no other plan but trickery. By subtlety they are to apprehend Him and put Him to death. By trickery Pilate is to be won to their side. By trickery they are to persuade the Governor that their one aim is to be loyal to Rome. By trickery they are to draw Jesus to some spot where they can safely surround Him and seize Him without provoking a rising of the people.

In the Talmud a detailed narrative is given of the way in which certain astute Jews pretended to be disciples of Jesus, and drew Him to Jerusalem where He was seized

and killed. That was the Jewish fiction; but it was true as far as this, that His enemies trusted to subtlety.

D. But it was not to be as they willed. Neither their force nor their subtlety was to prevail against Jesus. *He was offered because it was His own will* (Isaiah liii.). He was to become their prisoner and victim in the hour when He willed it, in the place He had chosen, after the manner approved by Himself. *For who is God but the Lord? or who is God but our God?* (Psalm xviii.). *They have intended evils against Thee; they have devised counsels which they have not been able to establish* (Psalm xx.).

"Teach us, O compassionate Lord Jesus, ever to say with Thy Holy Patriarch Joseph: *Can we resist the will of God?*" (Genesis i.).

E. *By subtlety.* We must never forget that Satan carries on his war much more by subtlety than by force. Hence the lament of his dupes throughout eternity is, *We fools. The serpent deceived me.*

"From the snares of the devil deliver us, O Lord."  
"Lead us not into temptation."

## STATION II.

*But they said, Not on the festival-day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people* (St. Matt. xxvi. 5).

A. *Unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who built it* (Psalm cxxvi.).

These blinded Rulers have passed two decrees.

(1) That Jesus is to be destroyed by subtlety. But God's decree is "not by subtlety," and God prevails.

(2) They decree, *Not on the festival-day*; but God's decree is, Yes, on the festival-day, and on no other day, shall the Lamb of God be slain.

"O wise God, O good God, O God our Father, may Thy most just and most holy will be always done on earth as in Heaven."

B. All their wisdom, all their subtlety is baffled and quite powerless. Our Blessed Saviour clearly foretold a week ago near Jericho how the end was to be brought about: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests* (St. Mark x.). The avowed and raging enemies can do nothing till a traitor appears to help them. A traitor, that is, a secret enemy disguised as a friend, a wolf in sheep's clothing; one of His own, who uses the knowledge he has acquired while a disciple, His own familiar, must come to be guide and leader to His enemies.

*If My enemy had reviled Me*, our Lord said by His Psalmist, *I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him; but thou, a man of one mind with Me, My guide and My familiar* (Psalm liv.).

C. Mark well how much more powerful for evil a traitor is than open enemies. Apostate priests and bishops were the founders and apostles of the great heresies. Traitors have ever been Satan's chosen allies and disciples, his twelve, and his seventy-two, whom, in mocking travesty of our Lord's holy methods, *he sent before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come* (St. Luke x.).

The traitor is within the fortress, and can in the moment of danger open the doors and let in the enemy. Our Blessed Saviour has more reason to say than any one else, "Save me from My friends"; from weak friends, half-hearted friends, friends without a will, treacherous friends, who when the battle is raging turn false and spread ruin. What can a general do when in the critical moment one of his trusted officers leads his men away to the enemy and jeopardises the whole army?

"The enemies of a man are those of his own household" (St. Matt x.). We are now those of our Lord's household. We must be either thorough and faithful friends, or, if traitors, His worst enemies.

D. The Priests and Scribes and Pharisees found not *what to do to Him* (St. Luke xix.), till the traitor came to

help and guide. *They found not what to do to Him, for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.* They were helpless till the traitor came to their assistance. For some time past, as we have seen, the Chief Priests and Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, they should tell, that they might apprehend Him (St. John xi.). But all in vain. He came and went as He pleased, and eluded their search till the traitor offered his service. *A man of one mind with Me; My guide and My familiar.* One of His own Twelve.

E. Even then, our Divine Lord could, of course, had it so pleased Him, have baffled the treachery of Judas as easily as He rendered void all the subtlety of the Rulers. But, from the inspired words of the Psalm, it would seem as if the bruised Heart of our Saviour did not wish to make any further resistance, as soon as His own chosen disciple became the leader of His enemies. *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he had spoken great things against Me, I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him. But thou, a man of one mind, My guide and My familiar: who did take sweet meats together with Me: in the house of God we walked with consent.* From my enemy I would perhaps have hidden Myself, but when My own chosen disciple comes against Me, I resist no more.

Judas was His guide and His familiar in the sense that he was allowed to manage for Him temporal concerns, and, no doubt, our Lord in many things followed his advice.

In literature we are told how Julius Caesar, when his own trusted friend, Brutus, stabbed him with his sword, covered his face with his mantle and struggled no more.

## SCENE XVIII.

THE ROAD FROM MOUNT OLIVET SOUTHWARD, TO THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL. WEDNESDAY EVENING.

## STATION I.

*And Satan entered into Judas, who was surnameed Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And he went and discoursed with the Chief Priests and the magistrates how he might betray Him to them (St. Luke xxii. 3, 4).*

A. *Satan entered into Judas.* Not now for the first time. Long before our Blessed Saviour said: *One of you is a devil (St. John vi.).* But as occasion offered, Satan induced his wretched dupe to commit new sins, and thus became more and more master of this miserable soul.

One of the curses pronounced in the 108th Psalm against this most unhappy man is, *Set thou the sinner over him, and may the devil stand at his right hand, to lead and guide to ruin the fallen child of Heaven who has freely elected to be Satan's slave.*

"Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but deliver us from evil. May Thy Kingdom come, more and more."

B. At the supper in Bethany, as we have seen, the avaricious heart of Judas was goaded to madness because Magdalen's alms did not come into his dishonest keeping. Ever since that hour he has been meditating how to regain as much as he has lost.

C. Now he hears our Lord say that after two days He shall be delivered up. If so, no time is to be lost. Some one else may turn traitor and win the prize before him.

D. He finds, therefore, some excuse for leaving the company round our Lord, and bends his steps towards Jerusalem.

E. Contemplate Judas as he walks alone towards the city, his person, his secret thoughts, his words, his actions. The Psalmist prays: *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth,*

and a decr round about my lips. Incline not my heart to evil words; to make excuses in sins, with men that work iniquity.

And I will not communicate with the choicest of them.

The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head.

For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased; their judges falling on the rock have been swallowed up. They shall hear my words, for they have prevailed (Psalm cxl.).

These ought to have been the thoughts of a chosen disciple of Christ, trained by our Lord Himself; but the Latin proverb is true: *Corruptio optimi pessima*. When the best and the holiest are once corrupted and tainted, theirs is a corruption the most complete of all and the foulest. Judas has, during so many days of grace and miracles, been carrying about within him death and foul corruption, so that all graces and good and holy thoughts are now at once turned into poison and malice. Great need has he now to pray: *may a watch be set before my mouth, and a door round about my lips*. But, on the contrary, out of the abundance of his bad heart his mouth is going to speak. Great need he has to cry out for grace, for his heart is now *wholly inclined to evil words*.

He is planning and arranging in his mind his interview with Caiphas and the rulers, *the men that work iniquity*; and is preparing excuses for his treason. He will tell them how at last his eyes are opened to the wickedness of Jesus and to His blasphemous pretensions. He does not say: *I will not communicate with the choicest of them*; on the contrary, his thought is: "As soon as I get a chance, and when it is dark, when I can go unnoticed, I will communicate with the choicest of them, those who are the most bitter in their enmity to Jesus."

"The just Man corrected him in mercy," and reproved him in the supper-room at Bethany with much meek gentleness and charity. "O chosen disciple! you ought to have welcomed the correction. You ought to have

blessed the loving Heart whence the reproof came." But all is now venom and deadly poison within his soul. He much prefers to have his head fattened by the oil of the sinner. The tempter is whispering the flattering words of approval which the priests and elders will shower upon him. If his good angel could gain a hearing, he would remind him to pray with the Psalmist: *Let them be presently turned away blushing for shame, that say to me: 'Tis well, 'tis well* (Psalm lxix.); but now, alas! his soul longs for the oil of sinners; and the father of lies multiplies before his imagination seven times, and seventy times seven times, the fair words and the pieces of gold and silver that they will gladly give him for such a prize.

F. True, at times, our Lord sends terrible fears which make him waver, for *wickedness is fearful, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). But, when he thinks how his treason may be discovered, and how Peter and the rest of the Twelve may fall upon him in their rage, and how the anger of God may overtake him, then the father of lies reassures him and whispers delusions of this kind: *My prayer shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased*. You have no wish to see Him slain, as they wish. He has often escaped from them, and so He will again. You shall be enriched, but "these wicked judges shall fall against a rock, and be swallowed up". They will listen to you and give you all you want, for "My words will prevail".

G. Did the tempter tell him how small the price was to be for his treason, and how vast the treasure he was giving up? Did he tell him that thirty pieces of silver, nothing more, were the commutation or exchange which he was to receive in lieu of his God, his companionship with Jesus, his apostleship, his eternal home in Heaven, his immortal soul?

Judas had no doubt heard our Lord ask the question, *What exchange shall a man give for his soul?* (St. Mark viii.). If a man once makes over his soul to Satan, what price



would induce Satan to give it back? Satan said to Christ: *All these (all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them) will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me* (St. Matt. iv.; St. Luke iv.). What price would he not give, if allowed to do so, to win one soul created by God to His own image, and redeemed by the Blood of Christ, and sanctified in Baptism by the Holy Ghost? Far more for the soul of a chosen disciple. But, alas! he knows through a most melancholy experience that he can dupe us and persuade us to sell our birthright and ourselves and our God, for a mess of pottage, for thirty pieces of silver, or even less.

## SCENE XIX.

THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER ON THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL.  
WEDNESDAY EVENING.

## STATION I.

*And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised. And he sought opportunity to betray Him in the absence of the multitude* (St. Luke xxii. 5, 6).

Judas said to them: *What will you give me and I will deliver Him to you?* (St. Matt. xxvi. 15).

A. The evening of Wednesday is come. Judas, who is the man of business for the Twelve, has, as we have seen, found some pretext for leaving his companions on Mount Olivet to go into Jerusalem. Unnoticed on the road crowded by strangers, he makes his way from Olivet southward, past the pool of Siloe and the village, to reach the hill on the south-east of the city, where the High Priest had his country villa. He sends in his message that one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth has important news for the Priests. Everything about Jesus is, in their excited state, to them most important, and therefore Judas is admitted without delay into the presence of Annas, the hoary arch-sinner who leads and guides this death-struggle

against the Lord and against His Christ. With Annas are gathered Caiphas and the rest.

B. And so now the priests of the Old Covenant and the man chosen to be an Apostle of the New Testament stand face to face. They are met to set a price on the Blood of the Lord.

Listen to the solemn recantation of the fallen disciple; with how much servility, and with what a profusion of obsequious words he renounces his Master, Jesus Christ, and wishes to make amends to those who had been so wronged by Jesus, by now becoming their faithful servant, and helping all he can to put an end to the mischief which Jesus is working. And he can render valuable service, for he knows all the habits of the Galilean. He knows where He hides Himself. He knows where He passes the night. He can easily put them in the way of apprehending Him without any fear of a tumult. "I know all His secrets and His plans. I have been one of His chosen Twelve. I was His treasurer. He leant entirely on me." The more he can enhance his own importance in their eyes, the larger, he makes sure, will be their offer.

C. *And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.* Little reason have they to be glad. Small joy will grow out of the unblest alliance between the cast-away priests of the Old Testament and the traitor who should have been an Apostle of the New.

Alas! what an evil hour it is for us when at last God gives way, and no longer resists our corrupt will, and abandons us to our desires, and lets us prosper in wickedness. *I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners. Until I go into the Sanctuary of God and understand concerning their last ends—How are they brought to desolation!* (Psalm lxxii.).

"O God our Father, never allow us to constrain Thee to say of us: *I let them go according to the desires of their heart; they shall walk in their own inventions*" (Psalm lxxx.).  
D. *They covenanted to give him money.*

Many fair words, no doubt, they gave to the miserable man ! Much praise for his loyalty ! And they also added abundant assurances that of course they would reward him well, and for the rest of his days prove their gratitude to him.

E. But Judas' trust in these castaway priests is about as great as their trust in him. He is not satisfied with a vague promise of money.

*What will you give me, he asked, and I will deliver Him to you ?*

"You know how much you have longed to have Him in your grasp. I can put Him completely in your power, to do what you wish with Him. What will you give me ?" It is Jew against Jew. Love of money has hindered them from winning mercy for their starved souls by almsgiving. Love of money has changed him from a chosen disciple into a devil. *One of you is a devil.*

They deliberate, and possibly retire to consult together as to the price. Much they wish to have Jesus in their grasp, but much also they wish not to let money out of their grasp. They deliberate. Annas is ever the ruling spirit in these evil deliberations. When huckstering had gone on for some time between these priests and the traitor, at last they fix their ultimatum. Judas can have thirty pieces of silver, no more.

## STATION II.

*They appointed him thirty pieces of silver*

(St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. Is that all ? after so many fair assurances ? Contemplate the fierce vexation of the covetous traitor. Thirty pieces of silver ! *The wicked shall see and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). "Thirty pieces of silver, Judas !" If an ox gore a bondsman or bondswoman, the owner of the ox shall pay thirty sicles of silver to the master of the slave (Exodus xxi.). "Thy

you offer to me the price of a slave for delivering up to you the great leader of the people ?"

But the father of lies is whispering that, no doubt, much more will be added later.

Many commentators think that the thirty pieces of silver were thirty sicles; the appointed compensation for a slave killed. Others think the silver pieces were only half-sicles. There is much difference in the calculations of Biblical scholars who try to fix the value of these thirty pieces. Some put the price paid as low as fifteen or sixteen shillings. Others suppose it to be about £120. A very painstaking modern writer sets down the thirty pieces as equal to ninety-three francs, less than £4.

When the objection is raised that the potter's field could not be bought at such a price, they answer that probably the burial-ground bought for strangers was a small plot of very poor land, worth very little; and they add that though Judas' fee was devoted to the purchase of this cemetery, other money may have been added out of the Treasury.

Against this latter supposition might be urged St. Peter's word (Acts i.), that Judas *hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity*. Though the words of St. Peter were partly a figure of speech, since, according to the common opinion, Judas did not live to be in possession of the field; yet the words would imply that the money of Judas purchased the field.

The Prophet Zachary is supposed to allude to this bargain in chapter xi.: *They weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said: Cast it to the statuary (the potter?). A handsome price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I cast them into the house of the Lord to the statuary (the potter).*

The Patriarch Joseph, a type of our Lord, was sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis xxxviii.).

B. Learn a lesson from these hard-hearted and blinded priests. They are willing to pay thirty pieces of silver to gain possession of Jesus in order to destroy Him. He is offered to us at a less price that we may possess Him and enjoy Him for ever. *You that have no money, make haste, buy and eat* (Isaiah lv.).

Alas ! alas ! how closely we should now be united to our Blessed Saviour had we been always willing to pay the little price asked of us for the possession of Him ; less oftentimes than the two pigeons offered by Holy Mary in the Temple.

C. Judas was willing to sell his Divine Master for thirty pieces. Seeing that he could extort no more *he promised*. When grievous sin is committed, our Lord is given up, and as far as it rests with us, given up for ever, often for less than thirty pieces; for a theft; for a sensual gratification; for an act of revenge.

"O my God, the whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew (Wisdom xi.). What then shall the poor sinner think throughout eternity of the bargain he made, and the price he accepted in exchange for Thee, his God and his all?"

*Woe is me! The serpent deceived me.*

*Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water (Jerem. ii.).*

### STATION III.

*And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray Him*  
(v. 16).

A. He has not got his money yet; he has still to earn it; and scant indeed though his gains be, he devotes himself earnestly to the task of securing his thirty pieces of silver. All that night and next day his mind is planning and contriving.

Oh, that we who claim to be children of light would learn from this child of darkness to traffic diligently! If we work to win Jesus as Judas did to betray Him, we shall certainly succeed; and with what a different outcome! He gained his thirty pieces, but not to enjoy them; we shall gain Jesus, to have Him and possess Him and love Him for ever.

*And the day of the unleavened bread came (the first day of the Azymer), on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed (St. Luke xxii.; St. Matt. xxvi.).*

### CHAPTER V.

#### HOLY THURSDAY.

#### SCENE I.

#### JERUSALEM.

Preparations for this solemn Pasch were being made in Heaven, in Hell, and on earth. "*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte.*" Oh, let us not pass heedlessly on our way, but halt at least a little while, to see with the eyes of our soul and to listen with our ears.

Early in the morning of this day, as some commentators infer from the Talmud, at the door of every synagogue in Jerusalem—and there were many—the sentence of the Greater Excommunication was solemnly, and with sound of trumpet, pronounced by one of the Priests against Jesus of Nazareth. Before the arrival of the Romans, the effect of this awful sentence was that the criminal so doomed was outlawed, and could be hunted down and slain by any one so blessed as to find the chance of striking the blow. The Romans, by taking away the power of life and death, lessened very greatly the terror of this sentence, but the form still remained; and the ceremony would, it was hoped, help to overawe the people, and bring them to see that Jesus was not, as they thought, a holy Prophet, but a most wicked seducer. To a certain extent it is a sore disappointment to the Priests and Ancients that the Excommunication cannot have its full effect. Gladly indeed would they have used their ancient liberty and offered ample largess to any one who would bring to them Jesus of Nazareth, alive or dead. But the day of their theocracy is passed. They are the slaves of the Romans. There is no Judas Maccabeus living

now to assert their independence. On the north side of the Temple area, even on the sacred Mount Moriah, and almost within a stonethrow of the Holy of Holies, stand the impregnable towers of the fortress Antonia, the Roman stronghold, with its hated Roman name. There it stands, the inheritance left them by a creature of Rome, the alien usurper, Herod—Herod the Great, so called. The fortress Antonia controls the whole city; but most of all, every movement of the Priests and Levites in the Temple. They cannot stir hand or foot in their thralldom. And at this season, when Jews from all countries crowd into Jerusalem, Roman vigilance is doubled and trebled. On the other hand, there is this one great consolation for the malice of the Jewish Rulers, that the Roman law allows more ample room for their cruelty. They will not be limited to *forty stripes save one*. Neither will they be obliged to put the blasphemer to death by stoning, for the Romans crucify. And till now in the history of the world, no form of death has been found out more appalling than crucifixion. The Rulers have, therefore, selected for Jesus the Roman death by crucifixion.

### STATION I.

*The day of the unleavened bread came (St. Luke xxii. 7).*

A. Listen to the trumpet sound, and hear with a heavy heart Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed excommunicated and an outlaw.

St. Ignatius, in his meditation on Hell, directs our special attention to the blasphemies there uttered against Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are permitted to approach Him in the holy tabernacle to console Him and say: "Thou art not excommunicate, dear Lord, nor the outcast of the people (Psalm xxi.). *Tu Rex gloriæ Christe; Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius—Thou art the King of Glory; Thou art the Father's own Eternal Son.* Besides Thee what have Thy blessed ones in Heaven? Besides Thee what need we desire on earth?" (Psalm lxxii.).

Let us not hasten away too soon; for gladly are we welcomed by our Blessed Saviour when we remember Him and come to console Him. Linger then still a little, to say with St. Bernard:

Nili canitur suavius, Auditur nil jucundius, Nil cogitatur dulcius, Quam Jesus Dei Filius.	No music soothes the ear, No voice so sweet to hear, No day-dreams half so dear, Jesus, as Thy loved Name.
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B. We may also learn here to value at their true worth human judgments, the praise of men and their blame. Jesus of Nazareth is sentenced as a wicked outlaw by these miserable Rulers; but the voice of His Eternal Father proclaims aloud: *This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased* (St. Matt. xvii.). What wonder that they who love Christ loathe the praises of the world that excommunicates Jesus? *The sons of men are liars in the balances* (Psalm lxi.).

C. Moreover, how fatal for ourselves it is to judge and sentence others rashly, and then spread abroad our calumnious judgments! These most unhappy men excommunicate Jesus; but on whose head does the sentence light? On His, or on theirs? *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself* (Romans ii.).

D. Meanwhile, despite the trumpet warning and the excommunication, and the mandate renewed that *if any man knew where he was he should tell* (St. John xi.), our Lord is walking in the daylight, surrounded by His followers. For not yet is the night come in which *no man can work*. They do not lay hands on Him, for their eyes are held.

### SCENE II.

BETHANY.

STATION I.

*The day of the unleavened bread came (St. Luke xxii. 7).*

A. Every day of His thirty-three years in this valley of tears, our Blessed Lord may be supposed to have said as the morning came: *I have a Baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished* (St. Luke xii.). Therefore, according to the inspired pro-

verb, *Hope that is deferred* has been afflicting His Soul; and now *desire when it cometh is a tree of life* (Prov. xiii.). This is the day of the Azyrnes which His Blessed Soul *with desire hath desired*. To-day we may be sure that He is saying from the day-break: Father, *My Heart is ready, O God, My Heart is ready* (Psalm lvi.). *O God, My God, to Thee do I watch at the dawning of this thrice blessed day* (Psalm lxii.). *My Heart watcheth because of the voice of My Father in Heaven Who is knocking* (Cant. v.).

B. And surely we may assume that His heavy-laden Heart finds relief in communing a little while with His Blessed Mother in Bethany, and telling her *the good tidings of great joy*.

*Ave, gratia plena! Arise, make haste, My Holy Mother, for My hour is come. For winter is now past* (Cant. ii.).

Let us also say from our hearts: *Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*. "The time is come, Blessed Mother, when thy Son and thy Lord shall be with thee in a new way—united with thee more closely than ever in the work of redemption." *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*.

C. Then, too, we may contemplate with what tenderness our Blessed Saviour looks for the last time on the holy home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus; and on the house, too, of Simon the Leper. St. John tells us two things: (1) that *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus*; and (2) that *having loved His own, He loved them to the end*. Therefore He is now more than usually manifesting His loving kindness in that blessed home at Bethany, where His eyes and His Heart have remained so long (2 Paral. vii.).

"Blessed Saints of Bethany, and all ye holy disciples of our Lord, pray for us, that we may know our Divine Master more intimately and love Him better."

D. Alas! close to this fire that is coming from His Sacred Heart is standing also the traitor, cold and lifeless. While the rest are drinking in hope and contrition and

love from the fountains of their Saviour (Isaiah xii.), he is absorbed in his one meditation: *how he may conveniently betray Him*.

What a meditation! Each of us may say, "Under the eyes of the Blessed Mother, and my good Angel, and the holy saints, I, too, have in time past studied how I could betray my God *conveniently*; how I could sin against infinite goodness and not suffer for it; how I could sin and not be found out; sin and continue to prosper; sin and be able to say that blasphemous word which the Holy Spirit bids me never say: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). *O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my offences are not hidden from Thee*" (Psalm lxxiii.).

## STATION II.

*And he sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat* (v. 8).

A. The mid-day is come, and Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Simon the Leper are allowed to give for the last time frugal hospitality to Jesus and His disciples. It is said that at this dinner Judas is placed between Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and that Holy Mary begs him to watch over her Divine Son, for she knows how His enemies are raging. What a contemplation!

When the repast is ended, as the Apostles and others are gathered about Him on the hillside, and the holy women are grouped perchance round our Blessed Lady, He reminds all that the first day of the Azyrnes (unleavened bread) is come; the day *when it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed* (St. Luke xxii.).

The disciples at once answer: *Whither wilt Thou that we go to prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch?* (St. Mark xiv.). B. Judas perchance joins in the question, for he is on the alert. Hitherto he has been the managing man, and if employed on this commission, he may find his opportunity of

betraying conveniently. But the desire of the sinner, like the subtlety of the Pharisees, shall perish. For the Lord is looking into the hearts of men, and into the most hidden parts (Ecclus. xxiii.). Already the sentence gone out against Judas is beginning to have its fulfilment : *His bishopric*, his Apostleship, his vocation, all his sacred offices and charges, *let another take* (Acts i.). "O fallen disciple of Christ, *great as the sea is thy destruction* (Lament. ii.); *not a stone shall be left on a stone* : not a vestige of thy heavenly dignity,"

*Miserere nostri, Domine*—Have mercy on us, O Lord, and do not cast us away from Thy face.

C. Jesus has this time no trust, no commission for Judas. But for the great and sacred work to be done to-day, the remembrance of (all) *His wonderful works*, He selects the fitted ones; the disciple who loves Him, and the disciple whom He loves. He sent Peter and John, saying : *Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat*.

D. The disappointment ought to have been a grace to Judas. For it was when the prodigal could not get the husks of swine he craved for, that his thoughts at last turned homeward to his father. It was when Ignatius could not find a romance to read on his sick-bed at Loyola, that he was willing to read about Christ our Lord. Oh, that we would persevere for good as this fallen man perseveres in evil ! For he only redoubles his earnestness to find out how to betray conveniently.

### STATION III.

*But they said : Where wilt Thou that we prepare ?* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. How late it is to think of beginning preparations for the great Pasch ! Clearly these are the preparations of poor men whose banquets can soon be got ready. *Blessed are the poor !* "Draw us, O Lord, to Thy blessed poverty."

B. It is precisely because they know that their Master

is quite poor, that they ask : *Where wilt Thou that we prepare ?* The Law prescribed : *Let every man take a lamb by their families and houses* (Exodus xii.). Where is Thy house, dear Lord ?

The Holy House at Nazareth has long ceased to be His home : and here in Judaea, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head (St. Matt. viii.).

The vengeance of the Rulers in Jerusalem has rendered it quite unsafe for any one there to harbour Jesus. When the blind man, restored to sight, dared to say a word in defence of Him, *they cast him out*. And this casting out meant at least the "Lesser Excommunication," which brought with it many severe sufferings.

C. Is it not a marvellous proof of the overruling care of Divine Providence that, notwithstanding the fierce storm raging in Jerusalem, there is such holy calm across Mount Olivet at Bethany ? For the terrorism which paralyses the people in the city seems to have no effect at all upon the faithful disciples there, though only fifteen fur-longs off.

"Your Father in Heaven takes care of the lilies, and of the birds of the air ; and you, blessed Saints of Bethany, are you not of much more value than they ?" (St. Matt. vi.).

D. The Apostles then have good reason to ask : *Where wilt Thou that we prepare ?* Naturally they may expect that He will stay at Bethany and eat the Pasch where He is so welcome. But He has said : *Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat*. Possibly all who could do so were expected to keep the festival within the walls of the Holy City. Be this as it may, the Lord has said : *Go and prepare* : and the two commissioned are quite at a loss whither to go, for He is poor and homeless, and so are they.

E. We may pause a little while to contemplate the charitable poverty of Jesus. He was poor then, and remains quite poor still, in order that men may have continual opportunities of befriending Him, and that He

consequently may have abundant excuse for pouring out blessings on them through eternity. *Come, ye blessed, for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat* (St. Matt. xxv.). When has it ever been heard that a Prince, the heir to the throne, lived in great poverty in order that he might, afterwards when King, largely reward those who were kind to him in his poverty?

"Blessed for ever, Lord Jesus, be Thy most loving poverty that is so needy, yet enriching many" (2 Cor. vi.).

#### STATION IV.

*And He said to them: Behold, as you go into the city there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And you shall say to the good man of the house: The Master saith to thee: My time is near at hand, with thee I make the Pasch. Where is the guest-chamber where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples?* (St. Luke xxii.; St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. Thrice happy they to whom our Lord can thus tell all His wants without any fear of a refusal! As He has sent His messengers to this favoured man to ask for the guest-room, so now when He has some good grace in store for us, He directs His poor to our door. They are His special messengers, sent to ask us to give Him an alms. For it is with Him a sacred rule, fixed and unalterable: *Give and it shall be given to you* (St. Luke vi.). Blessed are those who respond quickly and heartily, as this *good man of the house* does.

For we learn from tradition that the owner of the house was as overjoyed at the good news, as Zachæus had been last week at Jericho.

B. *And he will show you a large dining-room furnished; and there prepare ye for us* (St. Mark xiv.).

How happy that good man was through all the remainder of his life, how happy will he be through eternity, that he promptly gave what his God asked of him! Men con-

sider themselves most fortunate if their king or their master is obliged by an accident to ask a service of them.

"*Thou art, Lord Jesus, sweet and mild* (Psalm lxxxv.), *gracious and of much compassion* (Jonas iv.). Who makest Thyself perfectly poor in order that Thou mayest be obliged to beg from us."

C. *A large dining-room furnished.* When He came on earth to be our companion and our model, He began life in a stable, and through life endured discomfort and poverty in order to win us to poverty and lowliness. But this night He is to begin His Eucharistic Life, and in this new existence His object is not so much to be the model of our outward life as to be our Emmanuel: that is, our God with us; our Sacrifice, our food, our support, our own beloved Jesus. And in this new and most strange existence He desires to be well treated, most generously treated by us. He is glad if we give Him the very best that we have. For here He can be rich without scandalising us. He can be rich and yet make us love poverty. He therefore arranges to begin His Eucharistic Life in a spacious and well-furnished chamber; and His grateful Heart will never forget it if we love the beauty of His house, and do our best to make His home on earth in every way suitable and becoming. Hence St. Thomas of Aquin's teaching, which he derived from the spirit of Holy Church, that around the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, the beauty of the sanctuary, the splendour of the services, the sweetness and majesty of the sacred anthems should all show that the grateful hearts of the faithful wish to go as far as human skill can go, in order to do honour to the adorable Mysteries.

Quantum potes tantum aude,  
Quia major omni laude,  
Nec laudare sufficit.

Dare all thou canst through all thy  
days,  
And still seek new and worthier lays,  
For ye He soars beyond thy praise.

D. And if it is His wish to begin His Eucharistic Life in a large and well-furnished Guest-chamber, much more

does He desire in Holy Communion to find in our souls a guest-chamber very clean and seemly and well-adorned. For then will He be able to pour out blessings, as He did in the house of Zachæus, so that "our souls may be filled with grace and a pledge of future glory be given to us". If not hindered, He will surely say to us in that hour: *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

*"Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes? and I will weep day and night (Jeremias ix. 1), because in the years gone by I have not prepared a worthy guest-chamber for my Lord in the hour of my visitation."*

## SCENE III.

### JERUSALEM. THE CENACULUM.

I. To reach Jerusalem more quickly, Peter and John would naturally choose the short, rough road over Mount Olive; but when they arrived at Gethsemani they would be at a loss whether to make for a northern or a southern gate. As, therefore, our Blessed Saviour knew that the Cenaculum, for the use of which He was begging, was situated at the south-western corner of the city, He no doubt directed His two Apostles to a southern gate, where the water-carrier would naturally be.

The site of the Cenaculum is now outside the more modern walls raised after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Emperor Adrian. But at the time of this Pasch the Supper-room stood within the city; and from the Cenaculum to the palace of the Priests, the distance was probably not more than about two hundred yards. No vestige remains at present of the room where the Last Supper was held. A church was built upon the spot by St. Helen, and afterwards destroyed by the Mahometans. Another church was erected on the site by the Crusaders, but that also has disappeared. The greater part of the ground formerly occupied by those Churches is now desecrated by a Turkish Mosque. A large upper chamber is still visited, and called the Cenaculum. It is supposed to stand on the site of about forty feet in length, and resembling somewhat a small nave and aisle, separated from one another by a row of pillars. This chamber is in the possession of the Mahometans, and used by them for some religious purposes. Christians are liable to meet with much rudeness there; and are always required to pay a good entrance-fee. In an inner room they are allowed to look through

a window at what is called the Tomb of David. This Tomb of David, so called, is for the Jewish population and for travellers not Catholics, the principal feature of the building, which is therefore known better as the Tomb of David than as the Cenaculum. There seems, however, to be great reason to doubt whether any Tomb of David ever existed there. Under the upper Chamber now called the Cenaculum, there is on the ground-floor a harem, where Mahometan widows and other women live.

In this most sacred spot, as in so many others, faithful hearts are saddened by the *abomination of desolation*, but we are allowed to hope that the other words of Daniel do not apply to this most sacred sanctuary: *And the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end.* It is said that the Turkish Government never consent to make over to Christians any site where there has been a mosque for their own religion; but experience has proved that money has a wonderful power over the Sultans and their Ministers. If alms were abundant, many holy sites could still be rescued from desecration.

II. *And the disciples (Peter and John) did as our Lord appointed them, and they prepared the Pasch.*

The Law prescribed: *On the tenth day of the month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses. And you shall keep it till the fourteenth day of the month.* The lamb then ought to have been purchased on the Palm Sunday. Had the Apostles on that day made the purchase? Or may we assume that the good man who had the Guest-room prepared was also inspired to purchase the lamb on the day appointed and have it ready? It is said that his house was very large, and that he was in the habit of entertaining pilgrims who wished to celebrate the Pasch. One writer who collects from ancient sources states that the Guest-chamber had been prepared, by desire, for King Herod, but that the King had altered his plans, and did not use it.

III. Besides the immolation of the lamb, other rites were prescribed, and therefore there were other things to be provided.

*Thus shall you eat it.*

1. *You shall gird your reins;*
2. *And you shall have shoes on your feet,*
3. *Holding staves in your hands.*
4. *Moreover, they shall eat the flesh roasted at the fire,*
5. *And unleavened bread,*
6. *With wild lettuce.*

Some commentators think that many of these prescribed ceremonies had fallen into disuse. We are allowed, however, in contemplation to prefer the opinion of other learned interpreters who take for granted that all that had been prescribed was faithfully observed at this last and most solemn celebration of the ancient Pasch. The disciples commissioned would therefore see that the girdles, shoes, staves, and all else required, were in



readiness. The devout owner of the house had probably taken care to have all that was wanted.

IV. Again, some commentators are of opinion that all the lambs were slain by the Priests in the Temple, and then carried to the different houses. But others, and among them Father à Lapide, one of the most esteemed interpreters of the Holy Books, takes for granted that on this point the Paschal lamb was an exception to all other victims, and was immolated in each home by the head of the family. This seems more in accordance with the ordinance in Exodus xii.: *You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening.* The killing of the lamb would seem to be an important part of the sacrifice, and therefore included in what the *whole multitude of the children of Israel* were to do. Add to this, that it seems difficult to understand how the Priests could kill such a number of lambs as would be required for all the families in Jerusalem at a time when such multitudes of visitors were assembled there.

And if, moreover, the ceremony of sprinkling the blood was, as some of the best commentators think, still observed, this would add considerably to the difficulty, as the blood would have to be carried from the Temple to each house. There does not seem to be any reason why we may not in contemplation adopt the opinion of those who think that our Blessed Saviour was present when the lamb was slain.

One argument indeed against this view might be drawn from St. Mark's words: *And when evening was come, He cometh with the Twelve.*

But these words clearly do not mean that He then arrived at Jerusalem, for two of the Twelve were already in Jerusalem. St. Mark's meaning probably is, that when the sunset was come He went with the Twelve into the large Guest-chamber. And so St. Matthew writes: *When it was evening He sat down with His twelve disciples.* St. Luke: *When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.* He may, therefore, have been earlier in Jerusalem, and witnessed the killing of the lamb.

## SCENE IV.

### THE HALL OR VESTIBULE OF THE CENACULUM.

#### STATION I.<sup>1</sup>

A. It is supposed by some that our Lord Himself drew the first blood of the Paschal lamb. If so, as they

<sup>1</sup> Before commencing contemplations on the Watches of the Sacred Passion, it may be very useful once more to read carefully St. Ignatius' method of contemplating the scenes of our Lord's Life and of His Passion, as explained in c. i., p. 94.

bring towards Him this lamb, a yearling without spot or blemish, a meek lamb (Jeremias xi.) that makes no resistance, because it knows not that men had devised counsels against it, and that it is about to be made a victim, our Blessed Saviour's tender Heart understands full well the pitiful ceremonial.

B. In years gone by, when at Nazareth He was explaining to His Blessed Mother in the Sacred Books the things that were concerning Him, her heart was no doubt throbbing within her as she listened to words like those of Jeremias: *And I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim, and I knew not that they had devised counsels against Me, saying: Let us put wood on His bread,<sup>1</sup> and cut Him off from the land of the living, and let His name be remembered no more.*

And again the words of Isaïas: *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and shall not open His mouth* (c. liii.).

To His Sacred Heart, then, and to the heart of His Blessed Mother who, with the devout women, is about to celebrate the Pasch in another apartment, the lamb meek and without spot is a most vivid picture of what is coming. We must then, as St. Ignatius teaches, try in contemplation to read the thoughts of Jesus and of Holy Mary, and, if so disposed, speak to them in colloquies.

"O Lamb of God, meek and innocent, Who takest away the sins of the world, blot out those iniquities which blind me and harden my heart, and hinder me from realising that Thou art going to death because Thou hast loved me and delivered (Thyself) up for me."

Eia Mater, fons amoris,	Loving Mother, hear my prayer,
Me sentire vim doloris	In thy grief give me a share,
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.	Make me mourn with thee.

<sup>1</sup> Wood on His bread. They sometimes mixed the pounded wood of the poisonous yew-tree with food when they wished to kill by poisoning.

## STATION II.

*And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it on the side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses where-in they shall eat it (Exodus xii. 7).*

*And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be; and I shall see the blood and shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you (Exodus xii. 13).*

Let us watch the faithful observance of this prescribed ceremony; and, as we look upon the figure, think how the Heart of our Blessed Lord is thanking His Eternal Father for permitting Him to shed His Blood for us; and dwelling with exceeding consolation on the triumphs of His Sacred Blood in His future Church; how it will scare away the destroyer, and cleanse a multitude of sinful souls. *How much more will the Blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews ix.).*

"Save Thy people, O Lord, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood."

## STATION III.

*And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire (v. 8).*

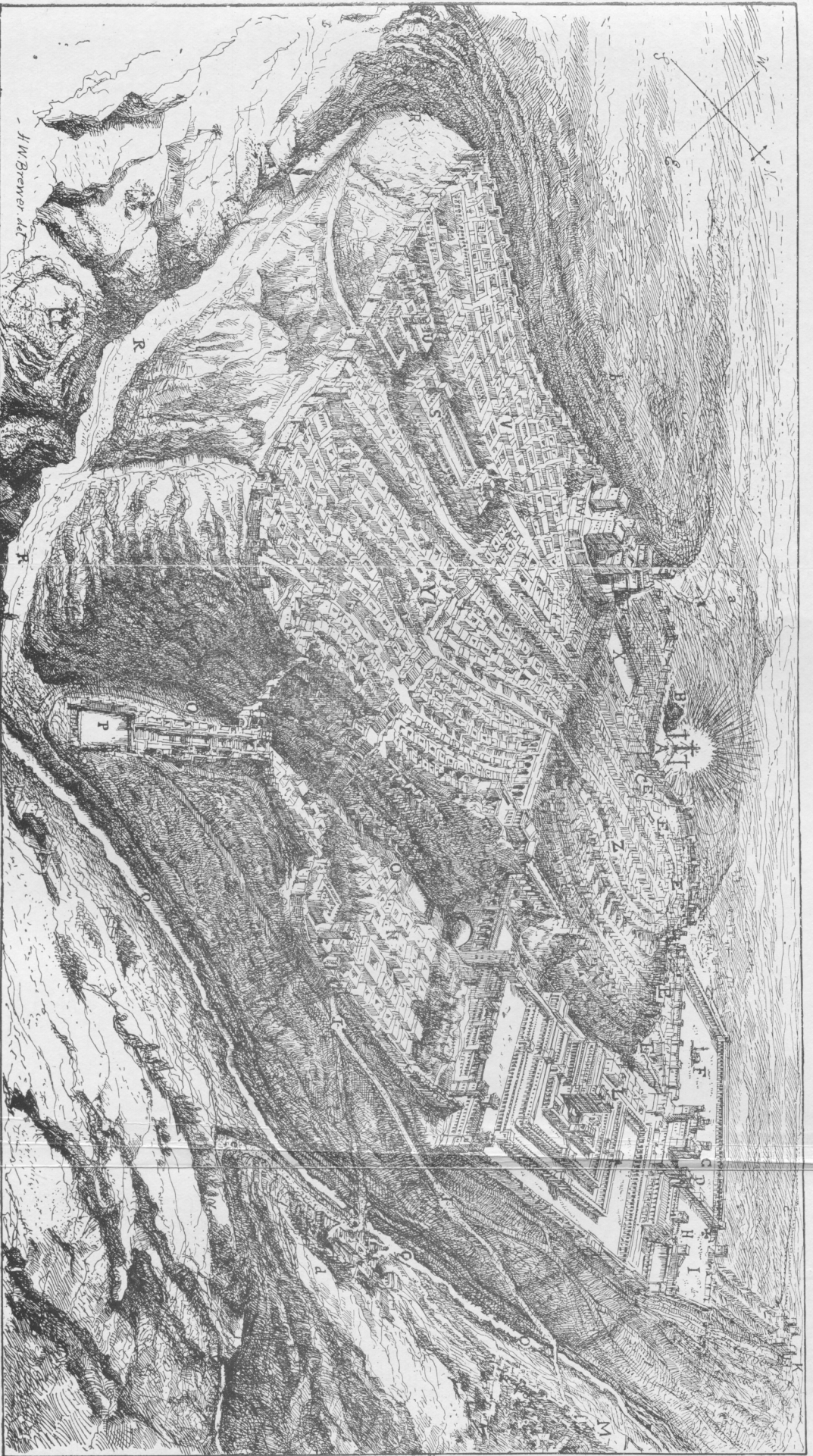
A. Contemplate our Lord as He looks on attentively while the lamb is being flayed and roasted. For He has vividly before His mind what is to be done to Him on the morrow, when His woollen garment, which His Mother wove for Him, shall be dragged out of His wounds, and His Body shall be like the roasted flesh of the lamb, *from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, wounds, and bruises and swelling sores (Isaias i.);* and all this because *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me (Galat. ii. 20).*

"*Sancta Mater, istud agas, crucifigi fuge plagas, cordi meo valde*—Do this for me, Holy Mother, fix the wounds of Thy Crucified Son firmly in my heart."

## LEGEND OF ILLUSTRATION

### "JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF OUR LORD"

- A. Calvary
- B. Holy Sepulchre
- C. Judgment Gate
- D. "Ecce Homo" Arch
- E. Via Crucis
- F. Roman Forum
- G. Tower of Antonia
- H. Pretorium of Pilate
- I. Gabatha
- J. Road of the Captivity
- K. House of Herod Antipas
- L. The Temple
- M. Gethsemani
- N. Ophel
- O. Tyropaeon Valley
- P. Pool of Siloam
- Q. Brook of Cedron
- R. Valley of Hinnon
- S. House of Caiphas
- T. House of Annas
- U. Coenaculum
- V. Sion
- W. Palace of Herod the Great
- X. Pool of Ezechias
- Y. Filia Sion
- Z. Acra
- a. Gareb
- b. Valley of Gihon
- c. Road to Joppa
- d. Slopes of Olivet
- e. Road to bethany and Jericho
- + Column of the Flagellation



JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF OUR LORD.

## PART II.

## THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION.

## CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST NIGHT WATCH, FROM SIX TILL NINE P.M.

## SCENE I.

THE GUEST ROOM. THE PASCH.

## STATION I.

*When it was evening He sat down with His twelve disciples*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 20).

*He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him* (St. Luke  
xxii. 14).

We may take it for granted that none but the Twelve were present with our Lord at the Last Supper. Our Blessed Lady and the devout women were, no doubt, in some other chamber under the same roof, and it is said that the seventy-two disciples, the future helpmates of the Apostles, were elsewhere in the building, eating the Pasch. But the text of the Evangelists seems to make it clear that none but the chosen Twelve were at table with Jesus. He had words to say to them that were not for others. He wished to prepare them with special care for their holy ordination to the priesthood of the New Covenant, and to make His last effort to win back the traitor Judas.

*When it was evening.*

The sun had set, and with the setting began the feast of the Passover; and within the four Watches of the night and the four Watches of the next day, the Passion of our Lord, His Death and His Burial, are to be completed, and all is to be consummated. "*Ordinatione tua perseverat dies*" (Psalm cxviii.). *By Thy ordinance, O God, this night and this day shall go on.* Through these night watches, and from the rising of the sun to its going down, *praiseworthy is the Name of the Lord* (Psalm cxii.).

*He sat down.*

The Latin word *discubuit* would imply literally that He reclined on a couch; but in this instance it may fairly be understood to mean that He and His Apostles took their places. Ordinarily, those at table reclined or sat; and the word is retained here, though they did not recline or sit during the Paschal supper, but eat standing. In consequence of the use of this word, some commentators have thought that the custom of standing had become obsolete. They go so far as to say that the ceremonies revealed to Moses were only for the first Pasch in Egypt, but this opinion cannot well be reconciled with Exodus xii. 24, 25: *Thou shalt keep this thing for a law for thee and thy children for ever. And when you have entered into the land which the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe these ceremonies. And when your children shall say to you, What is the meaning of this service? you shall say to them, It is the victim of the passage of the Lord.*

Just as the Holy Mass, then, is to show forth the Death of the Lord till He come (1 Cor. xi.), so the Pasch was to be a scenic observance that would bring to mind the night when the Lord struck the Egyptians and delivered His people. We may therefore assume that our Lord and His Apostles faithfully observed all the rites prescribed in Exodus xii. It is not indeed there mentioned explicitly that they were to stand, but this seems to be implied in some of the other ceremonies enjoined which we shall contemplate.

## STATION II.

*Thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste.—And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread with wild lettuce.—You shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain anything of it till morning (Exodus xii.).*

After making the usual preparatory prayer, and, in the first prelude, recalling shortly the portion of the story we have selected for our contemplation, in the second prelude we picture, as well as we can, the scene, the special table prepared in the large Guest-chamber for the eating of the Pasch; our Blessed Lord and the Twelve standing round in the prescribed pilgrim's dress, and with staves in their hands; on the table the roasted lamb, the unleavened bread, the wine, and the wine-cups; the dish of bitter herbs.

Then we are permitted to place ourselves in spirit at a little distance, and to watch and to listen.

But before we begin, we lift our hearts in the third prelude, and beg the grace we desire, which is to know our Lord better, to love Him more, and to follow Him faithfully; but, in contemplations on the Passion, also and specially, that we may have some feeling and confusion because our Lord is dying, or going to His bitter Death, for us.

After this we contemplate, sometimes looking at the Persons, sometimes listening to words, sometimes watching actions—whichever we think likely to suit us best; and afterwards reflecting on ourselves we try to gain some fruit. Or, if we think well, we can dwell rather on one of the other three additional topics or points suggested by St. Ignatius: (1) How much our Blessed Saviour is suffering or going to suffer; (2) how easily He could put an end to His suffering, but will not; (3) how He is suffering all for my sins. What, then, must I do?

A. First, then, we will notice the prescribed pilgrim's dress in its details.

In Egypt this dress prescribed to the Israelites—the shoes, the staves, and the rest—denoted that they were to be ready for an immediate journey. The Egyptians, when they became aware of the destruction of their first-born—for there was not a house in which there lay not one dead—pressed for their immediate departure. Pharaoh arose in the night and all his servants, and all Egypt.—And Pharaoh calling Moses and Aaron in the night, said, Arise, and go forth.—And the Egyptians pressed the people to go forth.—And they baked the meal.—And they made earth-cakes unleavened, for it could not be leavened, the Egyptians pressing them to depart, and not suffering them to make any stay. Neither did they think of preparing any meat (Exodus xii.).

While contemplating our Lord and His Apostles in their dress of travellers, we will be careful to reflect on ourselves and gather some good fruit.

*And Pharaoh in the night said: Arise, and go forth!*

And first it will be a holy and wholesome thought to keep in mind that we too are pilgrims and travellers. In the middle of the night there arose a great cry in Egypt, and the Egyptians bade the Israelites depart. So now also, in the middle of the night, we shall on a sudden hear the cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him

(St. Matt. xxv.). "Go forth, Christian soul." And after the summons we shall not be allowed to tarry any more, or to loiter. In that same hour it will be whispered at our bedside, "He is dead." "He is gone." "His place here is empty." Who is his heir? who succeeds? *For we have not here an abiding city* (Hebrews xiii.).

B. God, our Father, Who has His own home ready for us, has no pleasure in seeing us contented here with the husks of swine, at rest as if this valley of tears were our Heaven, and quite unwilling to go to Him when the summons comes.

It is the Holy Ghost Who dictated those words: *O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions, to a man that is at rest, and whose ways are prosperous in all things, and is yet able to take meat* (Eccclus. xli.). Therefore our loving Father often multiplies sorrows here to wean us from the good things of this earth, and make us willing to go at once when He calls us away. For, He knows how true the word is that follows: *O death, thy sentence is welcome to the man that is in need, and whose strength faileth; who is in a decrepid age, and in care about all things.*

Our loving Lord urges us to be faithful servants, with our "lamps in our hands," ready in the middle of the night to open when our Master knocks. How easy it is to become one of those who may say with truth, *My soul hath cleaved to the pavement* (Palm cxviii.) of this poor world; their motto is ever: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.). A Christian ought, like holy Simeon, to be living in the world to come, *expecting the consolation of Israel* (St. Luke ii.).

C. *You shall have shoes on your feet.*

Shoes were, moreover, emblematic of liberty; slaves went barefoot. When the prodigal came home, one part of the good father's order to his servants is, *Put shoes on his feet*. Remember the heavenly liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. *We are not the children of the bonds-*

*woman, but of the free. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Galat. iv.).

We must learn to say from our inmost heart: *Our Father.*

D. *You shall gird your loins.*

When the Ancients loosened the girdle, and let their robes flow, it was to enjoy rest and pleasure. The loins girt mean self-control, readiness for labour, chastity, and a renunciation of dangerous ease and pleasure.

"Attendite." *Look and do according to the pattern that was shown thee* (Exodus xxv.).

E. *Unleavened bread. Seven days there shall not be found leaven in your houses. He that shall eat leavened bread, his soul shall perish out of the land.*

Leavened bread was more palatable, and required more time for its preparation. Unleavened bread could be made quickly, and was penitential food. It reminded the Israelites of their dark days of slavery from which the mercy of God had delivered them. *Seven days thou shalt eat without leaven the bread of affliction, because thou comest out of Egypt in fear* (Deut. xvi.). If those who indulged in the luxury of leavened bread were to perish out of the land, surely we, who are disciples of Jesus Christ crucified, must not be the men condemned by St. Paul, *lovers of pleasures more than God* (2 Timothy iii.); men who treat with contempt prescribed laws of fasting and abstinence; men who, greedy to excess, devote their time and thought and industry and the money which ought to go to the poor, to the procuring of luxuries, and to "feasting sumptuously every day".

Catholics are sometimes tempted to vie with the luxury of their rich and worldly neighbours who form the good society (so it is called) of the great metropolises of this vast Protestant Empire built upon the ruins of the old Catholic Church in this country. We must not, however, forget the vision of St. John, wherein he foresaw the fate of every Babylon that was to come: *I heard another voice from Heaven saying, Go out from her, my people, that you be*

not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities. As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her (Apoc. xviii. 4).

*F. With wild lettuces.* (According to the Hebrew—bitter herbs.)

The Pasch is a joyful solemnity, and a triumph, but mingled with sad remembrances of Egyptian bondage, and also of the tribulation through which the people of Israel passed before they reached the land of promise. This is still more God's dispensation for the Christian Church. We have to remember, even more than old Tobias, the Prophet's words: *Your festival-days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning* (Amos viii.). For St. Paul's sentence must come true, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Timothy iii.). The Christian martyr has joy set before him as his Master had, but he must reach the eternal joy through many tribulations. He must climb up the mountain of the Lord to his eternal home, carrying his cross all the way. In Heaven all is joy; in Hell there is no joy, no love; all weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Here, on earth, on this battlefield placed midway between Heaven and Hell, the joyful songs of Zion and the wailing and the weeping of Hell are found mingled. *Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning taketh hold of the end of joy* (Prov. xiv.).

The Gloria in excelsis of the angels was quickly followed by the wail of the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem who would not be comforted (St. Matt. ii.), because their infants were no more. Sorrow is to be tempered by joy, and joy by sorrow. The Christian is to give to God many painful sacrifices, but all the while to be rejoicing: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice* (Philp. iv.). *For God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. ix.). So writes St. Paul, and he was, by God's great grace, able to practise himself what he preached: *I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly*

abound with joy in all our tribulation (2 Cor. vii.). The magistrates, rending off their clothes, commanded them (Paul and Silas) to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the gaoler to keep them diligently; who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas, praying, praised God; and they that were in prison heard them (Acts xvi.). Sorrow then with joy, and joy with sorrow! Bitter herbs and Paschal jubilee!

*G. And you shall eat in haste.*

Not with the haste of the greedy; but with the haste of travellers hurrying away from slavery into freedom. Haste that comes from passion our Lord does not commend, but there are at times good reasons for haste.

1. St. James writes: *Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak and slow to anger* (c. i.). For there is often great humility and charity in listening, whereas pride and impatience urge us to speak.

2. So too in Ecclesiasticus the Holy Ghost gives this counsel: *In all thy works be quick, and no infirmity shall come to thee* (Ecclus. xxxi.). This quickness is a conquest over that sloth, sluggishness, selfish laziness, which puts off, and dallies, and does work slowly, and with no diligence. The biographers of Henry IV. of France tell us that he spent less time in sleep than his enemy, the Duc de Guise, gave to his meals.

3. Our Lady, again, went with haste to the hill country (St. Luke i.), because she was going on an errand of humble charity.

4. In like manner the proverb tells us that we double a gift by giving it quickly. *Towards the poor be thou more hearty, and delay not to show him mercy* (Ecclus. xxix.).

5. Again, as selfishness and sensuality incline us to a prolonged and leisurely and comfortable enjoyment of pleasures or amusements; so our Lord, on the contrary, does not like to see us thus having peace in our possessions.



He prefers holy haste. When, therefore, Gideon was leading his army to battle, the Lord said to him: *The people are still too many; bring them to the waters, and there I will try them.* At the stream three hundred men lapped water, casting it with the hand to their mouth. These were chosen to fight the battle of the Lord. *The rest of the multitude had drunk kneeling*—that is, more leisurely, and at their ease. They were sent home (Judges vii.).

6. As in time of war, so in time of great sorrow men cannot be leisurely over amusements and banquets. Hence Ezechiel writes: *The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, eat thy bread in trouble, and drink thy water in hurry and sorrow* (c. xii.).

As, then, Christians are both soldiers and mourners, and as, moreover, our time for finishing our work here is short, St. Paul wishes us not to dally with the things of this world, not to waste time in nursing joys or sorrows that are merely of this earth. *This therefore I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that they that weep be as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not. And they that use this world as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away* (1 Cor. vii.).

H. *You shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain anything of it till morning. Neither shall a bone thereof be broken* (Exodus xii.).

All these injunctions denote haste. Nothing is to be kept for to-morrow; for there is not to be a to-morrow in Egypt for the people of God. Neither is there time to break the bones in order to suck out the marrow; nor time to clear out the brains and "entrails thereof".

To the Beloved Disciple, St. John, it was revealed, and through him to us, that some of these ceremonies were prescribed with a view to the Pasch that was to come. *For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed* (1 Cor. v.). The words, *Neither shall they break a bone of it*, he tells us, are a prophetic forbiddance to the Jews to break the legs of our Lord when they broke the bones of the other two crucified with Him.

#### PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

I. While contemplating these ceremonial rubrics of the ancient Pasch, we may find many useful suggestions how to prepare ourselves for the Blessed Eucharist, which is our Most Holy Pasch. Our anxiety then, when we are about to partake of the Heavenly Banquet, shall not be only to procure some sensible consolation and devotional feelings, but that we may grow in grace. And so, before Holy Communion, and also after:

##### 1. *You shall gird your reins.*

We may not be *discincti*—that is, without the girdle of restraint and self-control and guard over our senses—but with our loins girt, chaste and continent, and able to deny self. Isaiah says of our Lord (c. xi.): *Justice shall be the girdle of His loins, and faith the girdle of His reins.* And St. Paul writes to us: *Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth* (Ephes. vi.). For any one of these three virtues—that is, a habit of justice to God and man, or a strong and lively faith, or a great love for God's truth—will act as a girdle of restraint for our corrupt nature.

2. *You shall have shoes on your feet*; ready for a journey, ready for death, if God calls; ready, as the good soldier or servant is. If He says go, we go; if He says come, we come. *Shoes on your feet.* St. Paul says: *Having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace* (Ephes. vi.). That is to say, we are not to be satisfied with some passing emotions or affections, but we must have our souls so well prepared by careful meditation on the Gospel of peace, that now our feet are well shod, and we can walk safely, without taking harm from thorns or brambles, or from the stone of *stumbling or rock of scandal* (1 St. Peter ii.) which may come in our way. A sharp word, therefore, is not now to wound our souls so that sinful resentment shall set in. Neither are we, through human respect, to give ear to detractors, or those who speak of things not to be named among the holy (Ephes. v.).

3. *Unleavened bread. There shall be no leaven in your houses.* For the more we satisfy our appetites with the good things of this world—such as dainty food, the theatre, the novel, the news of the day—the less relish we have for the Body of our Lord.

Again, *unleavened bread, the bread of affliction.* For holy contrition penitential exercises and devout mourning are a preparation most pleasing to our Lord. *A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise* (Psalm l.).

4. *Bitter herbs.* For our prayer must be, *Passio Christi, conforta me.* In Holy Communion “the memory of His Passion is renewed”. An excessive craving then for sensible sweetness is surely somewhat unseasonable. Our humble prayer must be for courage to do acts of penance and self-denial.

5. *You shall eat in haste.* The blessed saints, in their well-prepared Holy Communion, obtained grace to make haste to enter into their eternal rest, and to use the things of this world quickly, as if they used them not; as means to their great end, but not as the home and the repose of their hearts.

J. Besides attending to the pilgrim's dress and the other rubrics of the Paschal supper, we will fix our eyes also on the reverence of our Blessed Saviour. For, whether He eats or drinks, or whatever else He does, according to the prescribed rites, He does all for the glory of His Father.

K. We observe also how virtue goes out from Him to His Apostles; how by looking on Him, and listening to Him, they have learned to become like to Him. With much devotion, therefore, and fervour, they unite with their Divine Master in the prescribed psalms and hymns.

L. Thanks to the charity of our Blessed Saviour, we too can always join our poor prayer to His. For He has made Himself our companion and our helpmate. He bears the yoke with each of us. When we play He prays with us,

when we suffer He too suffers, and adds worth and holiness to our weak efforts. It is this that makes His yoke sweet and His burden light.

M. And we may also try to read the thoughts of our Blessed Saviour as He gives to each a portion of the Paschal lamb. For well He knows what He is about to do this night. Not a small morsel, but the Lamb of God, whole and entire, is to be the food of each Apostle, and of every man that is willing to come to the Heavenly Banquet.

Non confactus, non divisus, There is no breakage, no dividing,  
Integer accipitur. Whole He comes to every one.

*I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven.*

“O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, and the memory of His Passion is renewed.”

#### STATION III.

*And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God* (St. Luke xxii. 15, 16).

A. *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.* “O vos omnes, attendite.” For He Whose name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace*, tells us His secret, that His Heart has been longing through life to eat this Pasch with these poor Galileans. Wise men of the world would shrug their shoulders and say there is no use in discussing or analysing tastes and caprice.

“O Mother of Mercy, our Advocate, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the meek and humble and condescending Heart of thy Son, *Whose delights were to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii.), and *Whose conversation is with the simple*” (Prov. iii.).

B. *I have desired to eat the Pasch with you before I suffer* When death is so near, and such a death, many men

would like to be alone, or to be with one or two who can sympathise; who will think of nothing and talk of nothing but the coming agony. But Jesus is thinking only of His disciples. It is for their sakes that He desires to eat the Pasch with them before He suffers.

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

C. *Before I suffer.* Is it not strange that no one among the Twelve fastens on this word and questions Him earnestly, "Are you really going to suffer, dear Lord?" As has so often happened before, they do not understand His word. Their eyes were sometimes held, and did not see; so now their ears also are held, and do not hear. Alas! how many and how many of our Lord's words have been much more wasted on me!

"Incline, O Lord, our ears to hear, and our hearts to compassionate Thee Who art going to suffer for our sins."

D. We may ask why our Saviour has so strongly desired to eat this Pasch?

We know, in part at least, the answer.

1. Before this Pasch is over, He will have shed His Blood, and redeemed the world. *I have a baptism where-with I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?* (St. Luke xii.).

2. This Pasch, therefore, brings to an end all the poor types and figures and shadows—*Umbryn fugat veritas, noctem lux eliminat*. This is the last of the shadowy and phantom Paschs. The reality begins to-night. *For I say to you that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

At this Pasch He will at last be able to give to His Most Blessed Mother and to His Church His own Body and His own Blood as their food.

3. Some of His other words also throw light on this one. He said: *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* (St. Luke xii.). By the hour of evening sacrifice to-morrow, Calvary will have

become a centre of light and fire brighter and warmer than the sun. *And there is no one that can hide himself from that heat and that light* (Psalm xviii.).

E. *Before I suffer.*

Yet pause a little while to consider this wonder. Here is a Man, a true Man born of a woman, Who has through life been desirous for this Pasch to come, because with this Pasch comes suffering and shame and torment and death. The whole world, wise and foolish, young and old, rich and poor, are toiling and studying and spending in order to escape suffering. Here is one who desires it much more than all men abhor it. Has He not a right to say: *Behold I make all things new?* (Apoc. xxi.).

F. And what is still more strange, He has the secret of enabling His followers also to desire and long for suffering. "O cross," St. Andrew cried, as he fell on his knees in sight of the terrible torment prepared for him, "O cross! so long desired, so earnestly loved, sought for unremittingly, and at last here ready for my longing heart, take me away from men, and restore me to my Master."

This is the heavenly change that the Passion and Death of Christ can work in our poor weak nature. *Passio Christi, conforta me.*

#### STATION IV.

*And having taken the chalice, He gave thanks and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God come* (St. Luke xxiii.); *till that day when I shall drink it with you new in the Kingdom of My Father* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

From St. Matthew's Gospel and St. Mark's, we should be inclined to think that our Lord said these words after instituting the Blessed Eucharist. They make no mention of any other passing round of the chalice, except when the Consecration takes place. But in St. Luke's Gospel it is clear that the chalice, or wine-cup, is handed round at least once before the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. Some writers gather from other sources that the wine-cup went round twice during the eating of the Pasch.

Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, now gives thanks, and blesses the cup and says to His disciples: *Take and divide it among you.*

A. *Having taken the chalice He gave thanks.*

Let us draw near and watch and listen, that virtue may come out from Him to us. Here, then, we are taught to give thanks; always and everywhere to give thanks to our Father in Heaven, in union with His beloved Son. "*Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.* May we bless and thank Thee for being a true, a good, a most loving Father to us."

B. *I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till that day when I shall drink it with you new in the Kingdom of My Father.*

Is our Lord here speaking of the day of Eternity when His Apostles will sit down with Him in the Home of His Father at the Supper of the Lamb? Some commentators so interpret.

But, as St. Luke places these words not after the Consecration of the Blessed Eucharist, but before, may not the meaning be: "I never more will taste the fruit of the vine, till by consecration it is made new in the Holy Sacrament which I this day institute for My Church"? St. Luke's text admits of this interpretation; and this sense would correspond with those other words which we have seen in his Gospel: *From this time I will not eat it (the Pasch) till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.* Our Blessed Lord did doubtless that night receive with His Apostles the Holy Communion under both kinds, and then the Kingdom of God was come, and the Pasch was fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. St. Matthew's text need not exclude this meaning—although he places the words after the Consecration—if we bear in mind, what commentators often inculcate, that he frequently departs from the chronological order.

If this interpretation be admitted, the abstinence of our Lord teaches us to earn, by abstaining from the good things of this world, such as meat and drink and romances and

theatres, an ardent thirst for the heavenly wine of Christ's Kingdom.

"Blood of Christ, inebriate me."

The holy disciples of our Lord have been in all ages inebriated and filled with a heavenly foolishness by partaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Intoxicated by the love of Christ Jesus, they could laugh at earthly pleasures and pains, and had strength to conquer all the wisdom and all the might and all the cruelty of tyrants.

C. *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.*

We may dwell a little longer on the abstinence of our Blessed Saviour. We have seen how hungry and how exhausted He has been during these latter days; how great His labour was, how long His watchings, and how scant His refreshment. When sitting weary by Jacob's Well, He asked the Samaritan woman to give Him to drink, but we do not read that He then either drank or eat. *I have a food, He said, which you know not; My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me (St. John iv.).* When men are much intent on some pursuit, they can forget food. Our Blessed Saviour night and day is hungering and thirsting that His Father's will may be done, and that His Father's beloved children may be saved.

"*Fac cor amans Jesu mei:* Do this for us, loving Heart of Jesus, do this for us; by Thy bitter Passion obtain for us to love Thee ardently, to hunger and thirst for Thee, that so we may not have our peace in the things of this earth."

D. *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.*

Let us pause still a while to ponder on these words: for one part of our Lord's meaning certainly is: "This is My last and farewell supper with you. The meat and drink of this world I have now done with."

We can make a reflection on ourselves. For our Master might go on to say to each of us: *Yesterday for Me, to-day for thee* (Ecclus. xxxviii.). The hour is nigh when you, too, shall say: "For the last time I have taken

my place at the family-table. For the last time I have had my chair by the fireside. For the last time I have looked on the green trees and the sea beyond. For the last time I have bought and sold. For the last time I am making my confession, and about to receive absolution. For the last time I am going to receive Holy Communion. This is my last Viaticum. My coffin and my shroud will soon be in this room, and men will dig my grave. In that hour, how shall I rate and value things of this earth? its pleasures and its pains? kindness and hard words? money and poverty?"

#### STATION V.

*Neither shall there remain anything of it until morning. If there be anything left, you shall burn it with fire* (Exodus xii. 10).

A. The ancient Paschal supper is now concluded, and, according to prescribed rule, whatever is over is consumed by fire; nothing is allowed to remain lying about to be desecrated by profane uses. So, too, on a former occasion, when our Blessed Saviour was exhibiting another prophetic picture of the Blessed Eucharist in the multiplied loaves, He said to His disciples: *Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost* (St. John vi.). As He spoke, His Heart was mindful how the Holy Spirit would teach His Bride, the Church, to gather up with great care and preserve in sacred vessels of gold and silver all the fragments of the Divine Banquet. What wonder that she lets no particle of the Good Gift escape her! (Eccclus. xiv.).

Is there not great force in the argument put forward by our great Cardinal Newman lately taken from us, against the validity of Anglican Orders, that if the Anglican clergy had been priests who could really consecrate at the altar, the providence of God would never have allowed all that profanation of the fragments which so long prevailed in those cold and desecrated churches from which all life had departed?

Let us pray earnestly that all true priests may greatly reverence the Adorable Mysteries; and that all outside

the Holy Church in this country may begin to desire earnestly the grace of receiving the real Bread from Heaven.

#### SCENE II.

#### THE USUAL FAMILY SUPPER.

*When the hour was come He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him* (St. Luke xxii. 14).

The celebration of the Pasch was followed by the ordinary supper. After, therefore, devoutly reciting the prescribed prayers and psalms which concluded the legal ceremony, the Lord and His Apostles doubtless left the special table prepared for the Pasch; and putting off, perhaps, the pilgrim's dress, took their places at the other tables which were ready for them in the large and well-furnished Guest-room.

I. Were they all at one table, or distributed at several small ones? Some Biblical students place them all at one table; and it is further stated in certain commentaries that the table was shaped like a horse-shoe. Other learned writers deduce from the Latin word *Triclinium*, that in those days the guest-chambers were furnished with many small tables, at each of which there was couch room for three guests (hence the name, *Triclinium*—a refectory furnished with tables, at each of which three might recline). If this was the arrangement, those authors are perhaps correct who at the same table with our Lord place St. John and Judas Iscariot. They place Judas there, because it is clear that he was so near that our Saviour could reach him the morsel, and also speak words to him which the others were not to hear. Another reason might be that evidently it was our Lord's wish during the supper to endeavour to soften the heart of this Apostle by marks of kindness.

With regard to St. John, there is no room for uncertainty. He was close to Jesus. Against this supposition, however, that there were several small tables with three at each, might be adduced, and with much force, the words in St. Luke's Gospel (xxii. 2): *The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table*. If the tables were so small, these words would have revealed to all who was the traitor.

II. Did they sit at the supper as we commonly see them painted, or were they reclining on couches?

It seems clear that the Eastern usage was not always uniform; that men sometimes sat at their meal, as we do, and sometimes reclined. Thus, in Genesis we read that when Joseph entertained his brethren: *They sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his age* (c. xliii.). Queen Esther, on the contrary, reclined on a couch (vii.). In the time of our Blessed Saviour also, it seems clear from the account of the entertainment in the

house of Simon the Pharisee (St. Luke vii.), that the guests were reclining. For St. Magdalen, we are told, was *standing behind at His feet*; and these words are intelligible if we suppose our Lord to be reclining on a couch, with His Head near the table and His feet away from it. In this position the guests leaned on one arm and fed themselves with the other. If the tables were semicircular, St. John might easily be so situated as to recline his head on the breast of his Divine Master.

St. Peter, as we know, was so placed that he was able to catch the eye of St. John.

After the usual Preparatory Prayer and Preludes, we begin to contemplate persons, words, and actions, using too the other three points suggested by St. Ignatius for the Passion; and begging also in the third Prelude for the special grace which we seek for in the Contemplation on the Passion. (See Introduction, Part II.)

## STATION I.

### THE ORDINARY SUPPER.

#### SACRED HOSPITALITY.

*He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him (v. 14).*

A. Were we present, we should certainly notice the charitable hospitality with which the good man of the house provides everything generously for the Master and His poor companions. Happy man to be so privileged! Nothing that he does shall be forgotten. As the Angel was writing on the wall at Baltassar's banquet, so now, recording angels register every detail, even *a cup of cold water* (St. Matt. x.). But what need of the ministry of holy angels when our Blessed Saviour is there Himself with His ever-grateful Heart, the same to-day as yesterday, the same as when at Bethany He said of Magdalen: *Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her?* (St. Matt. xxvi.). *In Thy book, Lord Jesus, in Thy Heart, all shall be written* (Psalm cxxxviii.); never to be blotted out; never to be forgotten throughout endless eternity.

*Sursum corda.* Let us lift up our hearts in great gladness; for, thanks to that boundless love which compels our Saviour to identify Himself with each of us, we can all give Him hospitality, even as this good man

did, by providing for His little ones. Most difficult it is for us who are selfish to believe those wonderful words, *Whosoever you did it to the least of My brethren, you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.). But *I do believe, O Lord, help Thou my unbelief* (St. Mark ix.).

B. May we not here rouse ourselves to adopt heartily St. Peter's counsel: *Before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: using hospitality one towards another without murmuring?* (1<sup>st</sup> St. Peter iv.).

*Using hospitality.*—And we must keep in mind the true idea of sacred hospitality that our Lord has given us. *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich: lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just* (St. Luke xiv.).

C. But are we then never to have a place at our tables for our friends and kinsmen? We need not be so stern. For our Blessed Saviour seems to be only afraid of kinsmen and neighbours *who are rich*, and will reward us by inviting us in return. He is a jealous God, Who desires much not only to have the delight of rewarding us Himself, but to be Himself our reward. *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy Protector and thy Reward exceeding great* (Genesis xv.). *Father, I will that where I am they also may be* (St. John xvii.). Therefore is He in dread of rich friends and kinsmen who can reward us on this earth, and thus rob Him of the privilege He clings to so fondly. If friends and kinsmen are in need of kindness from us, to invite them may be real hospitality. And if we invite friends and kinsmen in order to keep alive charity and strengthen family ties, for this He can bless us and reward us. But if we invite *merely* in order to be invited again, this must not be called by the sacred name of hospitality.

D. Old Tobias was hospitable. *There was a festival of the Lord, and a good dinner was prepared in Tobias' house. He said to his son, Go and bring some of our tribe that fear God to feast with us (c. ii.).* What a wise instruction! For such invitations sent to those who fear God, because they fear God, entitle us to the rewards due to the holy who fear God. Human justice, human gratitude, human wisdom, would perhaps scoff at such a compact as this; but our Blessed Saviour has willingly bound Himself to it. *He that receives a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man (St. Matt. x.).*

*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like to Thee? (Psalm xxxiv.).* He is not only a patient rewarder, but we may say that He alone is a true and real rewarder. *Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful (Ecclus. xliii.).*

E. Abraham understood and practised sacred hospitality. *He was sitting at the door of his tent in the very heat of the day, and when he had lifted up his eyes there appeared to him three men standing near him: and as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground, and he said: Lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant. But I will fetch a little water, and wash ye your feet, and rest ye under the tree. And I will set a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart: for therefore are you come aside to your servant. And they said, Do as thou hast spoken. Abraham made haste into the tent to Sara, and said to her: Make haste, temper together three measures of flour, and make cakes upon the hearth. And he himself ran to the herd, and took from thence a calf very tender and very good, and gave it to a young man, who made haste and boiled it. He took also butter and milk, and the calf which he had boiled, and set before them. But he stood by them under the tree (Genesis xviii.).*

"*Attendite et videte.*" It was in the heat of the day, when men are lazy and more selfish. These strangers have no claim, according to the ideas of this world. But

with Abraham they have this strong claim that they are *strangers*, and therefore at present homeless. His hospitality is according to St. Peter's own heart, *without murmuring*. He has no knowledge that they are angels. He addresses the principal visitor as lord because holy hospitality is reverential and most courteous. He begs them as a favour not to pass him by. He worships them and looks on their visit as an honour. He promises them *a morsel of bread*, but takes care to give much more; all the best that he has, meat very tender and very good; and butter and milk. *Look and do according to the pattern. What a joy for ever after, when he found that he had been entertaining God's angels!*

F. Were we present in the Cenacle, we should also assuredly notice how our Saviour and those He has trained are not only very temperate and abstemious, but also not at all hasty or precipitate in eating and drinking; and how with great charity they prevent one another's wants, and how they are all more impressed by the holy thoughts which their Master suggests, than by the courses served to them.

#### STATION II.

*And whilst they were eating He said, Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray Me. One of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me. But they began to be sorrowful, and to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. But Jesus said: The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. And they being very much troubled began every one to say to Him one by one, Is it I, Lord? Is it I? Who saith to them: He that dippereth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me. One of the Twelve who dippereth with Me his hand in the dish. And the Son of Man indeed goeth according to that which is determined: but yet woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been*

*born. And Judas that betrayed Him, answering said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it (St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.; St. Luke xxii.).*

*A. One of you is about to betray Me.*

This is the first time that our Saviour during the supper discloses the terrible secret which He is carrying about with Him. Thrice again, as we shall see, He will return to this most oppressive sorrow that is weighing down His Heart. How often it happens that the father of the family, the head of the house, is obliged to sit down to table, and to try to look cheerful, and hold conversation with his guests, and all the while he has a heavy load on his heart! This shape of sorrow, as well as so many others, our Lord would taste Himself and sanctify. It is a most bitter draught, and He has to drink it to the dregs.

We who are hard-hearted cannot at all conceive the anguish of the wound left in the tender and grateful and loving Heart of our Saviour by the ingratitude and treachery and apostasy of one of His chosen Twelve. To Judas He could say as truly as to the rest, *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you. I have called you friend, because all things whatsoever I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.* To Judas, as well as the rest, *He gave power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and He sent (him) to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.* And in a special way He could call Judas *My guide and My familiar* (Psalm lvii.). *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard and have not done it? (Isaia v.). Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard? (Jerem. ii.).* These words the Prophet wrote, but in the most meek and compassionate Heart of our Saviour they find their most intense expression.

B. We have meditated on that secret disclosed by our Divine Master. *My Heart hath expected misery and re-*

*proach* (Psalm lxxviii.). We may try to picture to ourselves the insolent scoffing of Lucifer, his blasphemous triumphing when he tears away from Jesus Christ one specially chosen, one whom He has been labouring to keep, as *the hen gathereth her chickens under her wing* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

C. While contemplating this sad ruin, this fallen Apostle, we cannot forget that high as his dignity was, yet in many ways we are more privileged. For certainly, when our Lord is now speaking, Judas has never received the Blessed Sacrament, which we receive so often. And we shall see that it is very doubtful if he ever did receive It. He has not witnessed the Sacred Passion, nor heard our Blessed Lady appointed to be the Mother of all disciples, and the special refuge of sinners. Surely each of us may well say, *He that is mighty hath done great things for me.*

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, that all the goodness of God our Creator, of God our Redeemer, may not be made void in us. *Tantis labor non sit cassus.*"

D. *One of you is about to betray Me.* Alas! most merciful Lord, to us you have a worse word to say, for now it is: *One of you, My chosen ones, My favoured ones, has betrayed Me, and betrayed Me not once only, but oftentimes, and not for thirty pieces of silver, but for less, far less: Our iniquities are multiplied before Thee, and our sins have testified against us. And we have known our iniquities (Isaia lix.). O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, but to Thee, the Lord our God, mercy and forgiveness, for we have departed from Thee* (Daniel ix.).

E. *One of you is about to betray Me.* Even if we had never sinned, we ought to work out our salvation *with fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.), lest we should ever come to betray our God, and fall under the terrible power of Lucifer. *He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall* (1 Cor. x.). But much more must the burnt child dread the fire. One reason why the Holy Spirit gives us that most necessary advice: *Be not without fear about sins forgiven*



(Ecclus. v.), is that sins forgiven are not unfrequently like bad wounds healed. All the damage done is not thoroughly repaired. There is left behind a predisposition to relapse.

Therefore, wise spiritual guides, like the holy Father Balasar Alvarez, teach their children not only to look back at past sins, but to make also the examination of foresight, that is, to look forward with care and solicitude to see what dangers are ahead.

F. *But they began to be sorrowful, and being very much troubled began every one to say to Him, one by one, Is it I, Lord? (St. Matt.; St. Mark).* Blessed saints! It is the characteristic of holy souls, the Fathers of the Church teach us, to fear danger even when they have no cause to fear. On the other hand, what more deplorable than to be in imminent danger of betraying our Lord and our God, and yet not sorrowful, not troubled, not concerned! If after a most merciful and loving absolution and forgiveness, we go back recklessly to very dangerous temptations, the result has been already foretold by the Holy Spirit: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Ecclus. iii.). It is simply impossible to hate sin against our good God as we ought, and at the same time hanker after occasions of sin.

G. *They began every one to say one by one, Is it I, Lord? Every one, one by one.* For each soul is a distinct and separate world. What profit is it to us that our nearest neighbour is good and faithful if we are not? Man, each man, is created to save his own soul. No proxy can do this for us. We must ask for ourselves, *Is it I, Lord? Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* Alas! how easy it is to sin and become callous; to sin and go on buying and selling, eating and drinking and sleeping; to sin and to prosper; to sin and to go on sinning; and in a moment they go down to Hell (Job xxi.).

H. *He that dipbeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me.*

We have seen already how in the 54th Psalm our

Blessed Saviour makes known to us how much His Heart was wounded by the treachery of one so intimate, *who didst take sweet meats together with Me.* He utters the same sad lament elsewhere: *Even the man of My peace in whom I trusted, who eat My bread, hath greatly supplanted Me* (Psalm xl.). We must reflect on our own case. To sit at table with Jesus, to share His bread with Him—oh, how immeasurably this intimacy falls short of what is permitted to us!

O res mirabilis! manducat Dominum  
Pauper, servus, et humilis.

O wonder of all wonders! the poor and lowly slave feeds on the Body of the Lord!

What *sweet meats* did Judas ever taste worthy to be named with our privilege? *For Thou didst feed Thy people with the Food of Angels, and gavest them Bread from Heaven, prepared without labour; having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.).

Observe: *Bread from Heaven prepared without labour*, that is, without labour on our part; but who can count up the price that Jesus, our Brother, paid in labour and cruel suffering, in order to win the Most Blessed Sacrament for us poor sinners?

I. *Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed* (St. Luke xxii. 22). *Not from His Heart does our Saviour pronounce this "woe". Not from His Heart hath He afflicted nor cast off the children of men.*

For if man will consent, the Lord will not cast off for ever. *For if He hath cast off, He will also have mercy according to the multitude of His mercies* (Lament. iii.). If man will consent! But if persevering with a most miserable constancy, man uses his free-will to the end against his Creator and most loving Redeemer, we know what the outcome must be: *Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent, like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers, nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely*

(Psalm lvii.). Our Blessed Lord, throughout the Sacred Passion, is the *charmer*. Who ever charmed so wisely as He? For besides all the beauty and loveliness of His own sufferings, He thought also of that most merciful plan of having His Holy Mother by His side, to the end that poor sinners might be more easily won.

J. And the Son of Man indeed goeth according to that which is determined; but yet woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed.

According to that which is determined. The death of our Lord has already been determined in Hell by the fallen angels, on earth by their dupes and ministers, the fallen priests: *One man must die for the people* (St. John xi.). They determined against Me an unjust word (Psalm xl.). And now, that which sinners in Hell and sinners on earth, as powerless and as foolish as they are wicked, have decreed in malice, the same our Father Who is in Heaven has out of His boundless charity and goodness ratified. And thus by His infinite wisdom and love, the Sacred Passion, intended by sinners to have been a scene of unmix'd horror, is changed into a spectacle so ineffably beyond the beauty of Paradise, that the blessed angels, if we may so speak, hasten out of Heaven in crowds to gaze upon it, and the Eternal Trinity decrees that it shall, by the miracle of miracles, be made perpetual and everlasting in the Holy Mass. In the end, therefore, the bitter chalice when presented to our Saviour comes from the hand of His Father. All other agents have power only so far as God says, *Fiat*. For great power (O God) always belonged to Thee alone, and who shall resist the strength of Thy arm? (Wisdom xi.).

K. According to that which is determined.

Therefore, some unwisely argue, Judas and other sinners are only instruments working out what God wills; consequently, their work is not so evil.

One reply may be that Judas and all sinners add beside what God wants, much, very much that He does not want,

but abhors with an infinite hatred; they add malice and sin. Sin was not necessary for the Sacrifice. Had Isaac died by the hand of his father, there would have been no sin in that death. And though we are appalled and bewildered when we read what some holy men have written, that the Blessed Mother of God, immeasurably more obedient than Abraham, would have had grace herself to immolate her Divine Son, had God asked that inconceivable service from His handmaid; yet with even our small measure of light we can see that, as all her motherly tenderness and love is only a small part of that infinite love with which the Eternal Father loves His only Son, even if her heart had undergone the agony of striking the death-blow, yet her act of self-immolation would have been immeasurably less than the act of the Eternal Father, Who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting (St. John iii.).

If God could have wished for sin, or looked upon sin with any other feeling but infinite horror, never would He have sacrificed His Divine Son in order to destroy sin.

God, therefore, in no wise wills the sin; but when the sinner resolves on sinning despite all the efforts He makes to prevent sin, God will not take away the free-will that He has given, but in His infinite wisdom will find out a method of utilising even sin, and making sin work together with everything else unto good for those who love God (Romans viii.).

L. But yet, woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed.

St. Paul writes: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (1 Cor. xvi.).

Some writers have gathered either from revelations made to saints, or some other sources, that on the Judgment Day Jesus will appear to all the immense multitude as He was in His Passion when the Roman Governor

solemnly exhibited Him to the people, saying, "*Ecce Homo*". Whether this be so or not, certain it is that His holy Cross and His wounds shall be seen by all, and shall make known to all and each that He loved them and delivered Himself up for every one.

M. In that hour all, either willingly or unwillingly, shall bow their knees when the Name above all names, the holy name of Jesus, is pronounced.

N. Then shall be heard a loud "Amen" to St. Paul's sentence: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.* "And Thou shalt overcome, Lord Jesus, when Thou art judged."

O. In that awful hour, even the most loving Heart of Jesus and the most compassionate heart of His Holy Mother, will firmly and unhesitatingly give their sanction to the final and irrevocable word, *Depart from Me, accursed.*

P. Then will that word spoken in the Supper-room, *Woe to the man by whom He shall be betrayed*, be understood, and be ratified by a pebiscite of all creation, and it shall have its fulfilment.

Q. "*Delicta quis intelligit?*" (Psalm xviii.). Who understands what it is for poor, fallen, helpless man to betray Jesus Christ? to betray God? to betray God made Man for us? to betray infinite goodness? as far as in us lies to hand over Jesus Christ, our God, our Creator, our most loving Redeemer, to the cruelty and malice of Lucifer? to betray Him—that is, to pass off as His friend, and then use our position in order to destroy Him, as far as in us lies?

And yet our Father's only desire is to be able to forgive us all our sins.

*Wash yourselves; be clean, take away the evil of your desires from My eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well and then come and accuse Me, with the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool* (Isaías i.).

*I will pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed*

*from all your filthiness; and will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh* (Ezech. xxxvi.).

R. *It were better for him if that man had not been born* (St. Matt. xxvi.). Tertullian, writing in our human style, says that when God created Adam, "knowing that he was a model for the future Adam (*forma futuri*, Romans v.) He was wholly intent on His work (*totum Deum occupatum*), His hand, His mind, His labour, His prudence, ordering everything most wisely". Each of us is predestined, as Adam was, to be a very perfect image of Christ Jesus; another Christ, and therefore each is created with infinite care and solicitude. If a great master had spent long years on a picture of Christ crucified, and saw it, in an evil hour, wantonly destroyed, how would he mourn over the work of his life! But what can this poor comparison do to bring before us all the disappointment and sadness with which our Lord asks the man who has chosen to die in sin: "*Quam commutationem*"—*What exchange shall a man give* (Me) *for his soul*, which My Father created with infinite care, and I redeemed with infinite love? Sin has defeated and baffled and quite brought to nought God's perfect work. *Better if that man had never been born than perish so!*

### SCENE III.

#### THE WASHING OF THE FEET.

*Before the festival-day of the Pasch.—And when supper was done* (St. John xiii. 1, 2).

The Paschal supper is ended, and the ordinary supper that followed is also practically ended. And now our Blessed Saviour begins to make immediate preparations for the fulfilment of ancient prophecies. *For behold I create a new heaven and a new earth; and the former things shall not be in remembrance, and they shall not come upon the heart. But you shall be glad and rejoice for ever in the things which I create* (Isaías lxv.).

*Before the festival-day of the Pasch.*  
We have been contemplating our Lord celebrating the last

great Pasch; and are now going to contemplate the washing of the feet. But lo! here we have St. John's testimony that the washing of the feet took place *before the festival*. Commentators have been obliged to say: *This is a labour in my sight; I studied that I might know this thing* (Psalm lxxii.). Father Coleridge has treated the question fully in his account of the Last Supper.<sup>1</sup> Among other solutions of the difficulty offered to us there are three which we may notice.

1. That when the *first* of the seven days of the Pasch—which was the solemn day, to be kept like a Sabbath—fell on the sixth day of the week, that is from Thursday at sunset to Friday at sunset, the Jews, by custom, were allowed to transfer this solemnity to the great Sabbath-day immediately following, so as not to have two strict holidays coming close together, and accordingly did on this occasion so transfer it, though our Lord adhered to the prescription of the Law, and eat the Pasch on the Holy Thursday, the 14th day of that month which was to be to God's people the *beginning of months* (Exodus xii.).

If this solution be adopted, St. John's words will mean that the washing of the feet and the Last Supper took place before the day on which the Jews that year kept the Pasch. This interpretation, though not altogether satisfactory, would harmonise with the hypocritical scruples of the Priests and the Ancients on the following morning: *Who went not into the hall that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch*.

II. A second solution, advanced by some, is that our Saviour would naturally, according to Eastern usage, begin the Paschal supper, as any other supper, by washing the feet of His Apostles; and so He would complete the washing before the sunset when the festival began. This explanation cannot be fitted in with St. John's precise words, that He began to wash the feet *when supper was done*.

III. A third solution, suggested by the Jesuit theologian Father Pereira, seems to be more satisfactory than any other. He observes that among Christians:

1. A festival-day is sometimes reckoned as beginning with First Vespers and ending with Second Vespers and Compline. This way of reckoning is akin to the Jewish method of counting from sunset to sunset.

2. Again, we sometimes date a festival from midnight to midnight; thus following the reckoning of ordinary civil life.

3. Also, we oftentimes mean, when we speak of a festival-day, the hours from dawn to nightfall. Father Pereira assumes as certain, or nearly so, that the Jews also in common parlance used all these three ways of speaking of a festival-day. So that when St. John writes: *Before the festival-day*, he does not necessarily mean before the festival celebrated from sunset to sunset, but may mean, on the evening before *Friday*, which, in common parlance, would be called the *festival-day of the Pasch*.

Considered in this way, Thursday evening would be like the First Vespers of the festival-day.

Two other suggestions may be offered.

The first drawn from the words of St. Luke: *The day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed*. Custom may have established an interpretation that the Paschal lamb must be *killed* on the first day of the Azymer, but might be eaten either at the First or Second Vespers of the festival. This interpretation would account for the Priests having to eat the Pasch on the evening of Good Friday. They were much too engrossed with their conspiracy against our Lord, to find leisure for the Pasch on the Thursday.

The second suggestion is that as there were seven days of Azymer, or unleavened bread, the Paschal solemnity lasted all these seven days; and therefore what we find in the writings of some contemplatives is probable, that there was a Paschal supper every evening during the seven days. One argument that might be adduced to prove that a lamb was eaten on each of these seven days, is that in Numbers xxviii. it is prescribed that during the Paschal solemnity *you shall offer a burnt sacrifice; seven lambs of a year old without blemish; and the tenth of a tenth of flour to every lamb, that is to say, to all the seven lambs*. One lamb might thus be immolated and eaten each evening *with the tenth of the tenth of flour* made into unleavened bread; and so the Priests might say that they had to eat the Pasch on Good Friday evening.

We may, however, perhaps add that it is scarcely worth while trying to account for the unaccountable scruples of men who did not wish to defile themselves by going into the judgment-hall, but were quite ready to crucify Jesus Christ. In whatever way the question be settled, we may safely take it for granted that the Last Supper was celebrated on Holy Thursday evening, and that at the close of the supper our Blessed Lord proceeded to the washing of the feet.

#### STATION I.

*Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father* (St. John xiii. 1).

From these words we see that all that now follows is our Blessed Lord's more immediate preparation for His Death. Here then we may well make a halt, and try, while we look upon Him and listen to Him, to learn how we too may prepare for death, praying that while we contemplate, virtue may come out from Him to us.

## A PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

A. *The First Lesson.*—*Knowing that His hour was come.*

This then is a first grace that we must ask for, that we may know when our time is come, in order that death may not take us unawares, before we have made our preparation.

But here a difficulty meets us. Why does our good God conceal from us the time of our death? Our Blessed Saviour, we read, knows that His hour is come. If we also knew in what year and on what day we should die, might we not make a better preparation?

One answer to this difficulty may be gathered from St. John's words: *But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them: for that He knew all men. And because He needed not that any should give testimony of man. For He knew what was in man* (St. John ii. 24, 25). Our Blessed Lord knows fallen man too well to trust us with this great secret, when the supreme moment is to come in which *if the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there shall it be* (Eccles. xi. 3).

For even now, when the tenure of life is so uncertain, how do men act? Let us listen to our Saviour's parable. *The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself: What shall I do, because I have no room wherein to bestow my fruits? And he said: This will I do. I will pull down my barns, and will build greater; and into them I will gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him, Thou fool, this might they require thy soul of thee* (St. Luke xii.).

If, then, when death is coming this very night, men adopt as their programme, *Take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer*, what power could check sensuality if they were certain that half a century of life on this earth was still before them? What would be the result? After forty years of sensuality and sin, we should have rendered our-

selves utterly unworthy of the grace of a good death. We should have become so familiarised with sin, that all inclination for repentance and holiness would be gone. We should certainly die as we have lived.

Moreover, even if it were possible after a life of sin easily to retrace our steps during the closing years or months, yet how could our Heavenly Father be content that His own children should for so many years wallow in sin, the outcast slaves of Lucifer, and a loathsome abomination in the eyes of their Creator? Therefore the Lord our God, knowing that, as a rule, we die as we live, and that a good life is the only preparation for a good death, warns us all from the beginning that death will come in the hour we do not expect; so that we may see the absolute necessity of living with our souls always in our hands, washed and cleansed and ready for the summons, whether it come *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning* (St. Mark xiii.). He loves us too well to disclose to us the hour of our death, but earnestly says: *Watch ye, therefore, lest coming on a sudden He find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch* (St. Mark xiii.).

B. We are not then to expect, or to wish, to know long beforehand when we are to die; but it is quite lawful to wish and pray that during our last illness, if we die by sickness, we may not be deluded by false hopes of recovery, but, with our Lord, may know that our time is come.

One reason, among many, why Catholics should shrink from mixed marriages, is the danger that often comes with them of an unprovided death. When a dying Catholic is surrounded by relatives, by nurses, by servants, by doctors, who are not Catholics, the principle is too often adopted that the dying must not be frightened. Cheering assurances of speedy recovery must be multiplied; and above all, no priest must be introduced till unconsciousness and coma shall have rendered nervous panic impossible. This is one terrible instance of the truth of our Lord's words: *A man's enemies shall be they of his own household* (St. Matt. x.).

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death, that we may then know that the great hour is come, and now prepare diligently for it."

C. Meanwhile, at present, our fervent prayer must be, not to know when we are to die, but for a strong grace that shall make us believe firmly that we must now and always be ready; that life is most uncertain; that death may come to us very soon and very suddenly; and therefore that we must watch and be ready.

#### STATION II.

*Jesus knowing that He should pass out of the world to the Father, that He came from God and goeth to God (vv. 1, 3).*

A. *The Second Lesson.*—We must, as a preparation for a holy death, pray that we may have grace to believe firmly that death is a going out of the world to our Father in Heaven; in other words, that a strong hope in the merits of our Lord's Death and Passion may bring to us this new conception of death, and take away from us *the sting of death* (1 Cor. xv.), which is sin and the effects of sin. Who among us would fear to die if this hope were laid up in our heart, that to die is to go home, to the House of our Father in Heaven? But this conception of death, which is the true one, and the one which, without presumption, we have a right to cherish, does not come naturally or easily to a soul in which sin has worked havoc. The first effect of sin in the Garden of Eden was to change in the soul of Adam and Eve filial feelings towards God into terror and suspicion and a malicious estrangement. So must it always be. Grievous sin always brings on a death, and as the death of the body is followed by corruption, so the death of the soul changes the filial loving spirit of a child into dread and malice; for malice in the soul corresponds with the rottenness and corruption of death. Therefore one daily task of those who wish for a holy death, is, by acts of inward contrition and outward penance and by strong

acts of hope and love, to diminish more and more that spirit of dread and estrangement from God which sin has produced; and to increase love which, when perfect, *casteth out fear* (1 St. John iv.). It is in order that this filial love of our Father in Heaven may be restored in our souls and the souls of others that our Lord teaches us to pray continually: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* May Thy name of Father become a dear name, a cherished name, a great reality to our souls!

B. It is worthy of note that contrition and penance are the short road to hope: *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.).

#### STATION III.

*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end (v. 1).*

A. *The Third Lesson.*—Our Blessed Saviour also prepares for His Death by manifesting more and more strongly the love for His disciples which burned in His Heart. And therefore His example says to us, *Go thou and do likewise.* What better way is there of winning abundance of grace for our last moments than by multiplying alms, and works of mercy, and earnest prayers for the crying wants of those around us on earth, and for the holy and suffering souls departed?

Some when advised to pray for others answer, "I need all my prayers for my own soul"; but our own great wants are the very reason why we should give alms to others. For we know that our Lord will not depart from that rule: *Give, and it shall be given to you in good measure.* It is true that He also said, *Ask, and you shall receive.* But we have to continue asking with importunity, and we have to join with asking, seeking and knocking. The best way of knocking at our Lord's Heart is by mercy to others: *Give, and it shall be given to you.* Prayer is good, but prayer for others is prayer and alms joined together.

B. When death is coming, selfish souls are rendered

more selfish by anxiety. They expect, as has been said, every one who comes near them to pray earnestly for them, and to send petitions for prayers for them to all who are said to be in the odour of sanctity, and to all holy shrines. But is there anywhere in Christ's Gospel a promise that this nervous selfishness will be able to awaken any fervent or widespread response from Christian hearts? No. *Give, and it shall be given to you*, is the one golden rule. If we are merciful during life, our Lord pledges Himself that He will help us *in the evil day* and on *our bed of sorrow* (Psalm xl.).

C. *Having loved, He loved them to the end.*

We must not overlook another important lesson suggested by these words, *Having loved, He loved to the end*. We cannot hope to begin the work of loving on our death-bed. Death is merely the close of life. If a death full of love is ever the outcome of a selfish life, this is a prodigy to be compared with those impossibilities of which our Lord makes mention: *Men do not gather figs from thorns, nor from a bramble-bush do they gather the grape* (St. Luke vi.). Life is the tree, and death the fruit. *There is no evil tree that beareth good fruit*. If during life we form the habit of almsgiving, that is, of loving our neighbour and helping his wants, we shall go on during our last illness loving and giving alms. But we must convince ourselves that there is no more chance of our beginning on our death-beds to love much, than of our beginning to speak Hebrew or play the church organ, if during life we have known nothing of Hebrew or music.

STARRON IV.

*The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him* (v. 2).

A. *The Fourth Lesson*.—Our Blessed Saviour, being perfectly meek and humble of Heart, is not moved by the ingratitude and wickedness of Judas to turn aside from the work of loving to the end, in which He is engaged. If we

are not strengthened greatly by the grace that comes from the Sacred Passion, a wrong done to us by a neighbour, or a calumny uttered against us may easily produce a resentment that shall upset our soul, and scatter to the wind all our good plans for preparing for death. Hence the Psalmist prays, *Redeem me from the calumnies of men that I may keep Thy commandments* (Psalm cxviii.); as if the calumnies of men were too crushing to allow the soul to attend to God's work.

But from the Sacred Heart of our Saviour came out into the hearts of His martyrs that unalterable meekness which enabled them to fulfil thoroughly our Lord's precept: *Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you*. They were strong enough to meet their cruel death with the words of the glorious St. Stephen on their lips, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge* (Acts vii.).

Therefore, one most necessary part of our preparation for death is to pray very earnestly for those who offend us, till we have entirely extinguished all resentment.

*Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of Heart, and you shall find rest to your souls* (St. Matt. xi.) through life and at death.

STARRON V.

*Knowing that the Father hath given all things into His hands, He began to wash the feet of His disciples* (vv. 3, 5).

A. *The Fifth Lesson*.—Lastly, our Blessed Saviour prepares for His death-bed by humbly washing the feet of His own disciples and servants. And so all manner of acts of humiliation must be a most salutary preparation for death.

Above all we must specially value the wonderful effects of the humble confession of sin, of humble acts of contrition, of humble acts of penance, of works of mercy which combine humiliation with charity. St. Augustine, a little while before his death, was reading the Penitential Psalms, and said he should be sorry to die on a day on which he

had done no acts of penance. To confess sins already confessed is often a most useful humiliation.

*End of the Preparation for Death.*

#### STATION VI.

*Knowing that the Father hath given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God and goeth to God, He riseth from supper and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel girded Himself. After that He putteth water into a basin and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel where-with He was girded (vv. 3—5).*

*A. Knowing that the Father hath given all things into His hands.*

An ordinary effect of honour on our fallen nature is to intoxicate us, and render us foolish. Twice in the 48th Psalm we read these words: *Man when he was in honour did not understand.*

The robes of office do not necessarily bring with them an increase of heavenly wisdom and all those other virtues which we need for a difficult position; but they do bring more servile worship from others, more adulation, more nourishment for our pride; and thus the man placed in honour easily becomes, as our Lord describes him, a whitened sepulchre, outwardly beautiful, but within, *full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness* (St. Matt. xxiii.). Hence St. Ignatius of Loyola enjoins that in the Society of Jesus every Superior entrusted for the first time with government, shall during his first year of office exercise himself for forty days in the humble work of teaching catechism to children. So, too, he required of those of his Fathers who held distinguished posts in the Council of Trent, that from the council-hall they should go to serve the sick in a hospital.

The Scribes and Pharisees very much loved honour and the first places. How thoroughly they were rendered

foolish by elevation we see in the language which they address even to God in prayer: *O God, I grieve Thee thanks that I am not like the rest of men*; and again from the suffering they went through in order to pass for holy men among the people. *They disfigure (extermine) their faces that they may appear to men to fast.* Add to this their long prayers at the corner of the streets and in the market-place. But above all else mark how they lost all peace and embittered their lives in their hopeless struggle against Jesus Christ: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity.*

Our Lord then leaves us as a precious legacy this lesson, that it is when we are placed in honour that we have most special need of lowly offices.

B. Contemplate Jesus washing the feet of Judas, and wishing by that act of reverence and friendship to soften his hard heart. Sorrow for His fallen Apostle was in His mind immediately before He began this humble exercise, and when it was ended, at once, as we shall see, His thoughts again revert to the miserable man duped by Satan. So that we may safely assume that one aim and object of His tender Heart in the washing of the feet was to make an impression on the traitor. It is said that He began His charitable task with Judas, and more than once affectionately kissed his feet and pressed them to His breast.

C. Another motive that inclined our Blessed Lord to this act of loving humility, was the great secret in His Heart that He was about to entertain His Apostles at the Heavenly Banquet, to be in after ages called the Supper of the Lord. It was a usual act of courtesy in the East to have the feet of the guests washed before a banquet. Our Saviour had not forgotten His own words to Simon the Pharisee, who invited Him to dinner: *Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house: thou gavest me no water for My feet, but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them* (St. Luke vii.).

His loving Heart will not, at His Great Banquet, omit any form of kind courtesy to His poor guests; especially



as He knows well that His humble charity will do much more than cleanse their feet, by bringing grace to their souls.

## STATION VII.

*He cometh therefore to Simon Peter, and Peter saith to Him: Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? (v. 6).*

A. We may stay a little while to watch and to listen; to watch with sympathy St. Peter's face, reddened with humble confusion, so expressive of the pain in his heart.

Then as we gaze on Jesus kneeling, we may also reverently try to read His thoughts. Is He perchance pouring out that most intense prayer for His future Vicar, to which later on, before leaving the Supper-room, He alluded: *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not?*

B. *Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?* "Attendite." Let us not hasten on, for these are words to treasure, and to imitate. "Lord, dost Thou not know me? Dost Thou bid me eat Thy Sacred Flesh and drink Thy Precious Blood? Lord, dost Thou absolve me once again? Hast Thou forgotten how often I have been forgiven, and how often I have fallen again?" The holy Psalmist cries out, *What is man that Thou art mindful of him?* But a more overwhelming question is this: "What am I, and who am I, that Thou dost still remember me, and bear with me and bless me and love me? So many—oh, how many—there are who would long since have done penance, sitting in sackcloth and ashes (St. Luke x.), and long since have loved Thee heartily, had the wonders been wrought for them which have been wrought for me."

## STATION VIII.

*Jesus answered and said to him: What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (v. 7).*

A. "Attendite." We will stay here again a little while to feed our souls on this word that comes from the mouth

of our Lord. For it is a word that is not to pass away; a word that our Blessed Saviour would often with great charity repeat to our souls if we would hearken. When we are eager for some desire to be accomplished, and are disappointed and tempted to murmur, He chides us with much compassion, saying: *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* Perhaps to-morrow all will be clear, and you will know why I did not grant this petition, but give you something better. But at least in the light of coming death and at the Judgment you will know how I acted towards you, and you will be well content, and bless Me.

You will say just what St. Paul said, that the tribulation was *momentary and light* (2 Cor. iv.).

B. When persecution rages and holy martyrs are led to the slaughter, the faithful at times begin to fear that the Lord has forgotten them. *What I do*, He answers, *you know not now, but you will know hereafter*, when the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of a glorious Church. He can never forget when His servants suffer, for in each of His martyrs He suffers Himself. Every lash that falls on them touches Him in the apple of His eye (Zach. ii.). Hence, when Saul was persecuting His disciples unto death, our Lord's expostulation with him was in this form, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* (Acts xxii.). And He further knows most intimately, for He has told us so, that unless the days of persecution were shortened, *no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.). Therefore, when He delays to come to the relief of His servants, we may not know what He is doing, but certainly we shall know hereafter that in this, as in all His works, He was most merciful and most just. *He hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling* (Psalm cxiv.).

C. Many ask with holy Jeremias (c. xii.): *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root.* If we know not now, we shall know hereafter, that even with the worst of sinners God is a

patient rewarder (Eccius. v.). He chastises little by little, giving them time and place whereby they may be changed from their wickedness, and by such works Thou hast (O Lord) taught Thy people that they must be just and humane (Wisdom xii.).

The Holy Spirit adds this remarkable truth: Thou (O God), being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity. It is said that in battle fear makes men cruel. They kill through fear of being killed. God, because He has all power, and has no fear, is gentle and tranquil. For Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt (Wisdom xii.). To us, short-lived and weak, He seems at times to act too slowly.

## STATION IX.

*Peter saith to Him: Thou shalt never wash my feet (v. 8).*

In St. Peter's impetuosity and abruptness there may have been fault, but, as we say familiarly, it was fault on the right side. His reverence and love for his Master made him shrink from seeing Him humiliated; just as on a former occasion he was shocked to hear Him say that He was to be put to death, and, taking Him, began to rebuke Him, *Lord, far be it from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee.* He had still to learn how true God's word is: *As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts* (Isaiah lv.). But let us pray most earnestly that some spark of the Divine fire which warmed his heart may be cast into ours.

## STATION X.

*Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me (v. 8).*

A. Let us pause a little while that a most useful lesson may sink into our souls. *If I wash thee not* thou canst not have that union with Me in prayer, that fervour at Holy Communion which thou art desiring. Spiritual writers impress upon us that we must watch very carefully over purity of conscience if we wish to arrive at close friendship with our

Lord! May our Blessed Lord grant us a great value for holy absolution, and the grace to say often and often, and always with growing earnestness, "*Ampius lava me*"—*Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

## STATION XI.

*Simon Peter saith to Him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head (v. 9).*

Our Blessed Lord well knows what kind of threat will make an impression on St. Peter's heart: *Thou shalt have no part with Me.*

Let us reflect upon ourselves and ask what manner of threats impress us and alarm us? And on the other hand, what kind of promises allure us? If we avoid evil, is it through fear of temporal chastisement? If we pray or do good works, is it to win better health? or some prosperity in this world? Is the dread of being separated from our Lord and having no part with Him our chief terror? Are we learning to say heartily St. Francis Xavier's prayer: *O Deus, ego amo Te?*

Why then, sweet Jesu, love not Thee,  
Who lovest me so tenderly?

Not that I may Thy glory see,  
Nor Hell's eternal tortures flee,  
Nor any way rewarded be,  
But only as Thou hast loved me,  
So love I now, and will love Thee.<sup>2</sup>

"Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels—the loving spirit of Thy blessed Apostle, St. Peter."

## STATION XII.

*Jesus said: He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For He knew who it was that would betray Him; therefore He said: You are not all clean (vv. 10, 11).*

<sup>1</sup> See P. S. Lallemant's *Doctrine Spirituelle*. <sup>2</sup> Father Eyre's translation.

A. The blessed saints on earth who walk in all the *commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame* (St. Luke i.), are clean of heart; but still as they walk, some little of the dust of this world settles on their feet; and this they carefully wash away by their daily contrition. And so pleasing to God is their contrition, that some spiritual masters teach that God suffers at times faults to remain in His faithful servants, in order that their great contrition may gladden Him and win grace for them. We read that St. Francis Borgia twice every day begged for absolution in sacramental confession, in order to cleanse his feet from the daily dust.

B. *You are clean.* Oh, how allowable it is for us to crave with a holy envy that we too may be so blessed as to hear now, and still more at death, that word full of hope, *You are clean.*

But more intensely far is our Saviour yearning to say to us at death that word so dear to Him, *You are clean*; that so He may present us quickly to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. For His own sake, for the honour and glory of His plentiful redemption, He desires that we may not be exiled to a long Purgatory.

C. *You are clean; but not all.*

Once more His oppressed Heart gives utterance to Its crushing sorrow. Once more He is hoping against hope that a friendly word of warning may move the traitor to be converted and to live.

Once more, too, must we humbly and earnestly cry out: *Have mercy on me, O God, and give me not over to a foolish and shameless mind* (Ecclus. xxiii.).

D. We must not fail to notice attentively in the case of Judas how often and in how many ways, "*multifarian multisque modis*," our Saviour seeks to make an impression on his hard heart. Not that *Thou wast unable, O Lord, with one rough word to destroy (him) at once.* But *Thou gavest (him) place of repentance* (Wisdom xii.). A year before, He had said in the hearing of Judas: *One of you is a devil.* And now with what a compassionate perseverance,

on this last night of His life, does He employ threats and kind words and miracles to move him to contrition! Because God does not use thunder and lightning against us, we are inclined at times to think that He allows sinners to perish without warning. But we see here clearly how many earnest efforts God makes to bring back the poor sinner, before it be too late. *I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Return ye and live* (Ezech. xviii.).

#### STATION XIII.

*Then after He had washed their feet and taken His garments, being sat down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am* (vv. 12, 13).

A. *Know you what I have done to you?*

"*Attendite.*" We will pause a little while, to hear our Blessed Lord put this question to each of us: *Know you what I have done to you?* when I created you? when I died for you? when I forgave you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times, and much more? when I planned My Blessed Eucharist for you? and gave you My Blessed Mother to be a Mother to you? And also: know you what I intend to do for you? when you have fought a good fight, and when your work here on earth is done?

B. *You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am.*

We must often practise our souls in good acts of faith "O most merciful Saviour, Thou art my Lord, my Master, my Redeemer, my Father, my God, that hast possessed me and made me and created me" (Deut. xxxii.).

We must also make acts of true contrition, because in time past we have so often by our wicked self-will denied that He is our Lord, and our Master, and our God.

#### STATION XIV.

*If then I being your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet* (v. 14).

A. Washing the feet of guests who arrived tired and travel-stained was an exercise that combined charity and humility. Charity and humility are two flowers, each most fragrant, and delightful to the Heart of our Lord. But skilful gardeners, not content with the beauty and brilliancy of single flowers, combine the colours together to make an exquisite flower-bed. Even so, a humble heart delights our Lord, and every act of charity also gives Him great glory; but when we have the chance of doing some service to a neighbour that is a humiliation to self as well as a good alms to him, we have found a golden opportunity of offering to Jesus a combination of the colours and the kinds of fragrance that He loves best.

## STATION XV.

*For I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also (v. 15).*

"Attendite." Here, too, we may rest a little while to learn another great lesson. *Look and do according to the Model* (Exodus xxv.) is a word that our Master is always silently saying to us, as often as we contemplate. His aim and object is not merely to enlighten our intellects or increase our knowledge; for He says to each of us: *If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them* (St. John xiii.). How often are we reminded of this truth, both by our Lord Himself and by His Apostles: *Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves* (St. James i.). *Every one, therefore, that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man* (St. Matt. vii.). Therefore, when by using our intellect or by the help of light from Heaven, we have an inward perception of a Gospel truth, then we must with our will labour earnestly to obtain grace to do what we have learned, remembering always that even when *the spirit is willing the flesh is weak*.

## STATION XVI.

*Amen I say to you: The servant is not greater than his lord. Neither is the Apostle greater than Him that sent him (v. 16).*

A. *The servant is not greater than his lord.*

All Christians in authority, even those in the highest stations, such as Bishops and Kings and the Holy Father, are the servants of our Lord, and His delegates, holding His place. And their claim and title to reverence and obedience is that they are sent by Him and represent Him. Therefore, he argues, "You who are My ministers and delegates must not desire more honours or more reverence than is given to Me; and if offices of humble charity, such as washing the feet, do not dishonour or degrade My ministry, neither will they degrade yours". If then the highest in Church and State are not to deem such humble works too menial for them, how much more reasonable is it that *we* persuade ourselves that humble acts of charity are most becoming in our position of servants of Christ; that a Christian who does not such acts of humble charity, while his Master is doing them, is a very unseemly spectacle in the eyes of God's angels; and that a favourite motto of every Christian ought to be that word of Christ: *I am come not to be ministered to, but to minister* (St. Matt. xx.); that is, I am come not to be served, but to serve. St. Ignatius opens his Exercises with this fundamental principle: "Man was created to serve"; that is, to be a servant, to be subject and to be useful to his Master.

How smoothly and peacefully our days would pass if we were once firmly persuaded of this truth, that serving is what we are by creation intended for, and therefore best suited for; and that, if placed in high position, we easily turn giddy unless helped by an extraordinary grace! What an immense amount of the suffering of life comes from craving, as did Aman, for some honour which God does not intend for us!

## STATION XVII.

*If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them*  
(v. 17).

"O vos omnes, attendite." Again and again we need reminding of these words, and must ask ourselves: Are we *doers of the law*? (St. James i.) or are we content with hearing or reading? Are we trying to copy into our own lives what we learn? Even if we fail somewhat in our practice through infirmity, yet so long as we are earnestly striving to be *doers of the law* we are in a good state. We shall not be judged by our success, but by our hearty efforts. Hence, prayer in desolation may win much more grace and reward for us than prayer in consolation.

It is quite necessary then to keep in mind that as good masters see that their pupils learn one lesson well before they pass on to another, it is far better to dwell on one word of our Lord till we do it than to read many and do nothing.

## STATION XVIII.

*I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled: He that eateth bread with Me shall lift his heel against Me* (v. 18).

A. *I speak not of you all.*

Suddenly, once again, the Divine Master breaks away from the thread of His instruction to think once more of Judas and to say some word that may reach his soul.

We often read in the Holy Gospels words like this: *Jesus answering said*: and on examination we find that He is answering not a question put to Him, nor any words that have been spoken: but the secret thoughts of His disciples. So may it now be that when He turns abruptly to speak of the traitor, He is answering some thought which, at the moment, the father of lies is suggesting and Judas is adopting. In spite of the warnings already given, Satan may still be trying to delude Judas with the

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hope that he is not discovered, that Jesus does not really know his secret, but is only making conjectures. Our Lord therefore again most pointedly declares that one *who eateth bread with Me shall lift his heel against Me*, and He states plainly that when a moment before He said, *Blessed shall you be if you do what I have taught*, He knew quite well that not all present would be faithful to His training: *I know whom I have chosen*. I have not been deceived. I know most intimately each one of the Twelve whom I have chosen. I know who are true, and I know the traitor. *Darkness shall not be dark to Me; and night shall be as light as the day*. Thy bone, Judas, is not hidden from Me, which I made in secret. In My book all shall be written and is written (Psalm cxxxviii.). *Though they be hid in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them away from thence; and though they hide themselves in the depth of the sea, there will I command the serpent and he shall bite them* (Amos ix.).

B. *I speak not of you all.*

No word comes from our Lord's lips except those, as He tells us, which He hears from His Father (St. John viii.); and no word of His is idle: *It shall not return to Me void* (Isaiah lv.). An idle word is one which the speaker utters without any desire, either actual, habitual, or virtual, to honour God by it, or to do good to himself or to his hearer. Our Blessed Saviour, whenever He speaks, is sowing good seeds; saying some words that shall bear fruit in souls, if not at the moment, yet surely in time to come; perchance in days far off; for the eternal God is patient and can wait (Eccles. v.; Wisdom xii.). Here He is forewarning His Apostles of the treason of Judas, in order that during His Passion and after, the remembrance of His prophecy may help to repair the damage done to their faith by the scandal of the Cross.

How often it happens that seeds sown in the souls of children bear a glorious fruit in old age, or on the death-bed!

## STATION XIX.

*Amen, Amen I say to you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me (v. 20).*

Sometimes a ruler, if he is flattered and made very comfortable, cares little how his delegates are treated. Let us study diligently the charity and equity of our Saviour. His delegate is as Himself. If we treat His delegate well, we are quite sure that He accepts all as if done to Himself. If we ill-treat His delegate, we ill-treat Him.

If then Christ sends us a poor man wanting help and we receive him, we receive our Lord. How blessed, thrice blessed the rich would be if they believed this truth, and understood their wonderful privilege of imitating God their Creator and God their Redeemer! For have they not power to imitate God's daily work described in the Psalms: *Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature?* (Psalm cxliv.). When a rich man gives an alms which raises the father and mother of a starving family out of the depths of hopelessness, does he not, like a Creator, give a new life to these crushed hearts? A Latin poet describes a Roman carpenter debating whether he will out of the log of wood before him produce an idol or some utensil for the kitchen; and he makes him resolve at last to create an idol.—*Maluit esse deum*. Near the rich man's home is a poor boy, hitherto well brought up by his pious parents, but now left an orphan. By a timely alms the rich man can often determine whether this child shall be in the future a worthy priest of God's Church, a glorious image of Jesus, a Saviour helping many to salvation, or shall be consigned to the corruption of the workhouse, or an errand-boy's life. *Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor* (Psalm xli.), and makes the right resolve. "Thi child of Heaven shall be the priest of the most high God."

## STATION XX.

*When Jesus had said these things He was troubled in spirit, and He testified and said: Amen, Amen I say to you, one of you shall betray Me (v. 21).*

*He was troubled in spirit.*

A. "Attendite et videte." Watch well His sorrowful face and listen to every word. After the short digression to His favourite teaching on charity, our Blessed Saviour's Heart allows His overwhelming sorrow to come back again for the fourth time. Perhaps He sees Satan making a desperate struggle to secure his prey.

We have here an exact picture of His way of dealing with our own souls. He has given us free-will, and will not take it away, nor coerce us; but He will kneel to us, as He did to Judas, and again and again speak words to soften our stony hearts. Shall we wait for the long leisure of Purgatory to multiply acts of contrition for the times without number when we hardened our hearts against the voice of our God? *I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me.—And I have sent to you all My servants the Prophets, rising early and sending,—and you have not inclined your ear nor hearkened to Me* (Jerem. xxxv.).

## STATION XXI.

*The disciples therefore looked upon one another, doubting of whom He spoke (v. 22).*

A. They make no rash judgment: but they are exceedingly anxious at hearing these repeated warnings.

"Pierce Thou (O Lord) my flesh with Thy fear (Psalm cxviii.) and every day of my life remind me of my great frailty; and that if Thou do not help me I shall certainly betray Thee."

## STATION XXII.

*Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved (v. 23).*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Stay a little while, to see and contemplate this picture. St. Ignatius tells all whom he instructs in the art of contemplation, to pray at each scene that "we may know Thee better, O Lord, and love Thee more, and follow Thee". For if we know well the loveliness of our Lord's character, all His tenderness, and true, affectionate friendship, how can we fail to love Him and to follow Him? The father of lies, on the other hand, is for ever poisoning our minds with calumnies against our Lord which estrange us from Him. We must then be wise, and look at Him attentively, and judge for ourselves.

Let us, therefore, watch Him on this last night of His life, with all the horrors of His Passion present to Him, consoling Himself with His affection for the disciple whom He loves with a special love.

B. We might naturally ask here, why our Blessed Saviour bears this special love to St. John? According to the opinion of the holy Fathers, we find the answer in the words of the Psalm, *Thou hast taken me up on account of my innocence, and established me in Thy sight for ever* (Psalm xl.). Others of the Apostles were married men. St. John, tradition tells us, was the youngest, and still in virginal innocence.

While gazing on the love shown to St. John, let us learn to detest more and more the sins that have obliged our Saviour to turn away in displeasure from our souls.

At the same time we will not forget how great His tenderness is even for sinners. What more consoling than His answer, when *Sion said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaiah xlix.). There

are few truths which we want more than this one; and therefore Satan labours untiringly to efface this true image of our Lord from our souls, and to leave fixed there the impression that He is an austere Master, Whose whole desire is to watch our sins, and chastise us rigorously. We must take care to dwell long on the scenes and words which reveal to us all His charity and compassion, and we must cry out hopefully, *Wash me yet more, O Lord, from my sins*, that at last we too may be among the disciples whom Jesus loves with a special love.

## STATION XXIII.

*Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom He speaketh? He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus said, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped (vv. 24—26).*

A. *Simon Peter beckoned to him.*

Simon Peter is chosen to be Christ's Vicar, yet he uses St. John as a mediator between himself and our Lord. Thus too, after His Resurrection, when Jesus stood on the shore, it was John who first recognised Him, and said to Peter, *It is the Lord*. So is it in Christ's Church: it is a Body with many members, the Vicar of Christ is the Head, and has all the gifts that belong to the Head. His official teaching is always guided from above. He is always an infallible teacher. But he has not necessarily all the different gifts which the Holy Spirit pours out on the whole Body. For to one, St. Paul writes, *by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy. All these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He wills* (1 Cor. xii.). For the sake of His people, in order that they may have a safe and easy path to heavenly truth, our Lord guarantees that His Vicar shall always be guided by the Holy Ghost when he teaches the Church; but there may be many living who surpass him in personal holiness.

In his private life he must, like other men, work out his own salvation *in fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.). Nay, he may have even more reason than others to fear and tremble, on account of the dangers which necessarily encompass his high position. It is on account of these many dangers to which he is exposed, as well as the great influence for good which a holy Pope can exercise, that prayers are offered for him daily on the altars of Christendom. It was so from the beginning. *Peter was kept in prison, we read, but prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him* (Acts xii.).

#### STATION XXIV.

*And when he had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon* (v. 26).

##### A. *The son of Simon.*

Unhappy Simon, to be the father of such a son! Christian parents by prayers and alms avert the calamity of seeing their offspring accused. Fathers who, like Tobias, give alms abundantly, win graces for their children. *The God of Israel bless thee, because thou art the son of a very good and just man, and that feareth God and doth almsdeeds* (Tobias ix.).

##### B. *He gave it to Judas Iscariot.*

Oh, let us not fail to contemplate this new effort of our Blessed Saviour's Heart to subdue the malice of Judas. With what infinite delight would He forgive all the past, if this fallen Apostle would humbly say, *peccavi*! How quickly He would run to meet the wretched prodigal, if by some act of mercy and charity to others this lost child of Heaven would make a first step towards a return home. *For I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

"From my hidden sins deliver me, O Lord, for they blind me, and hinder me from seeing how loving a Father,

how compassionate a Redeemer, Thou art to me. Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards me, and show me the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

#### STATION XXV.

*Judas that betrayed Him, answering said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him, Thou hast said it* (St. Matt. xxvi. 25).

A. The other Apostles had asked their Divine Master, *Is it I, Lord?* Judas could not do less.

B. From this passage we see that he must have been reclining near to Jesus, so that our Lord could hand him the morsel, and say a word to him not heard by the others. This is another chance given to the traitor. Many sinners, if they know that all their secret designs are found out, are afraid to go forward.

C. It is from this persevering zeal and charity of our Saviour, that St. Francis Xavier and the other apostolic saints learned not to despair of sinners, not to relax their efforts. How grateful through eternity will St. Augustine be to his true and faithful mother, St. Monica, because she did not lose hope and patience during her long years of watching and waiting.

#### STATION XXVI.

*And after the morsel Satan entered into him*  
(St. John xiii. 27).

##### A. *After the morsel.*

This sentence has often been taken to prove that Judas received the Blessed Eucharist. But, God be praised, it has no reference to the Most Holy Sacrament.

Father Salmeron and Father Coleridge have drawn out at length the arguments which render it probable that Judas was not present at the celebration of the first Holy Mass, and did not receive the Blessed Eucharist. Other commentators of great authority, such as Cornelius à Lapide, follow the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Chry-



sostom, St. Cyril, that he was present when our Lord distributed the Blessed Eucharist, and received with the rest. St. Thomas of Aquin seems to follow this opinion in his hymn—

*Cibum turbæ duodenæ  
Se dat suis manibus.*

"To the gathered Twelve, with His own hands He gave Himself." In these chapters on the Sacred Passion, for reasons that will be given later, the less harrowing opinion of Father Salmeron, and the order of events suggested by Father Coleridge, have been adopted.

*B. Satan entered into him.*

Satan had long ago found entrance into the heart of Judas; but now, as the tempter persuades him to reject every effort of his Divine Master to win him back, each resistance to grace produces an increase of hardness, blindness, and malice. As grace after grace is refused, Satan's mastery becomes more complete, so that by this time the sin of Judas is already in thought fully committed and consummated; and the father of lies is now undisputed master.

#### STATION XXVII.

*Jesus said to him, That which thou dost, do quickly (v. 27).*

A. It has just been said that the traitor's sin was already consummated. Therefore, in these words our Lord is not urging him to sin, but only to execute quickly the sinful plan already thoroughly resolved upon.

*B. That which thou dost, do quickly.*

Lucifer, whom St. Paul calls *the God of this world* (2 Cor. iv.), is planning the Passion of Christ. The Jews, under his inspirations, are also planning; but meanwhile our Blessed Lord and His Eternal Father have their fixed design which overrules every other. They permit Satan and the Jews to execute just so much of their plans as suits the merciful purposes of the Divine Providence. Among other details, our Blessed Saviour wishes all to be

done quickly, and therefore permits the Jews to carry out their malicious desire that all shall be done quickly. He wishes for quickness, that there may be less time for sins to be multiplied, and that the graces of redemption may come the sooner. They wish for quickness through their feverish and malicious longing to see Him dead.

#### STATION XXVIII.

*Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this to him, for some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him, buy those things which we have need of for the festival-day, or that he should give something to the poor (vv. 28, 29).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour has revealed to St. John who the traitor is; and before so doing, He prepares the soul of John so that he shall take no harm from knowing this most sad secret. Possibly too St. John may have given St. Peter some sign in answer to his question, that he also might know who was going to commit the crime. If so, then our Blessed Lord doubtless gave St. Peter also some grace to prevent sin in his soul. To the rest our Blessed Saviour did not make known the traitor.

*B. "Attendite et videte."*

How necessary the lesson that we learn by contemplating this reserve and *circumspection* of our Divine Master! If we reveal without sufficient reason the unknown grievous sin of another, we ourselves, as a rule, commit grievous sin. So long as a man's sin is secret, his reputation remains good, and a good reputation is a possession of high value. If, therefore, we destroy a good name by revealing secret sin, we rob a man of a most valuable property, and sin grievously. Moreover, when we sin by blackening the character of the absent, we often, at the same time, draw those who are listening into our grievous sin; since the listener, by listening, encourages the detractor to detract.

C. *Buy those things which were needed for the festival-day.*

Either Friday, the first day of the Pasch, or Saturday, the Great Sabbath, may be the *festival-day*.

Some commentators think that when the two came close together it was lawful on the Pasch to buy things needed for the festival.

#### STATION XXIX.

*He, therefore, having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night (v. 30).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour by saying, *That which thou dost, do quickly*, has told Judas the same thing He told the Rulers in the Garden later, *This is your hour*. He has most reluctantly given Judas what his will is bent upon, power to earn the price of his treason. And at once this unhappy man becomes the slave and the apostle of Satan; and sets about the task assigned to him by his new master. He hastens to Caiphas to urge immediate preparations, tells the Priests that Jesus is hard by, eating the Pasch on Mount Sion, and is sure to repair very soon to the Garden of Gethsemani.

"From all evil, O Lord, deliver us; lead us not into temptation; do not give us up to our own will; give us grace to do quickly all that we can do for Thee, but never to be quick to serve against Thee."

B. *And it was night.*

Darkness had set in. It was probably mid-way between seven and eight o'clock when Judas left the Supper-room.

C. *And it was night.*

A much darker and more dismal night had overspread his soul, than the night outside and around him. A night like the Egyptian darkness *come up from the lowest and deepest hell* (Wisdom xvii.).

D. *And it was night.*

"O yes, my God, my most loving Father, my most merciful Redeemer, it was most horrible night in my

soul when I abandoned Thee. *Malum coram Te feci*; in Thy presence and under Thy eyes, and when being led by Thy hand, and nursed by Thy loving care, I sinned against Thy infinite goodness.

"*It was night.* For indeed I did not know what I was doing. And it is night still, and will be as long as I do not love Thee, my God, my Father, my Redeemer, with a true and fervent love. Jesus, Son of Holy Mary, have mercy on me that I may see."

#### STATION XXX.

*When he therefore was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself (vv. 31, 32).*

A. *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*

The departure of Judas is the immediate preparation for the commencement of the Sacred Passion, so that our Lord speaks as if the desired hour had already come.

1. Now therefore He as Man is to be glorified. For His conquest over all that His enemies can do will prove Him to be more than Man; the true Christ, and verily the Son of God, and God equal to the Eternal Father.

The design and plan of His worldly persecutors is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. They resolve to put Him to the test. *We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true; let us prove what shall happen to Him: and we shall know what His end shall be. For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of His enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death, for there shall be respect had unto Him by His words* (Wisdom

ii.). As then, the princes of darkness and the Jews will put forth their utmost strength against Him during the Passion, but shall not conquer Him, He shall be glorified.

2. God also is to be glorified, because Jesus is to be obedient unto death, and by His obedience to give the greatest glory to His Father.

B. *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*

Alas! how often we have sought to glorify ourselves, and God was not glorified in us.

C. *And if God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him.*

If Christ as Man gives glory to God, God will in return give glory to Christ as Man, not only by the darkening of the sun and the rending of the rocks, and the other wonders wrought at His Death, but infinitely more by drawing multitudes of souls to Him. *If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed* (Isaiah liii.). *God will also glorify Him* by sharing with the Sacred Humanity all that can be shared of the Divine Nature.

#### STATION XXXI.

*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me, and, as I said to the Jews, Whither I go you cannot come, so I say to you now* (v. 33).

A. *Little children.*

His Heart is loving to the end. They are His loved little ones whom Satan hates.

B. *Whither I go you cannot come.*

This is an open announcement to His Apostles that His Death is close at hand, an affectionate and tender word of farewell. *You shall seek Me.* I am going, My place will be vacant; you will miss Me, you will feel My loss when you want counsel.

So have the holy servants of the Lord often taken leave of their children. "Farewell, children of my heart."

St. Anthony said to his disciples as he lay dying, "Anthony is departing hence, and will no longer be in the world present with you." St. Bonaventure also gives us this parting word of St. Francis of Assisi: "Farewell, my children, in God's fear. In it abide for ever, and since coming temptation and tribulation is near at hand, happy those who shall persevere in the course they have begun. As for me, I am hastening away to God, to Whose grace I commend you all." After a pause he added a word from the 141st Psalm: *The just are waiting for me till Thou reward me; and expired.*

#### STATION XXXII.

*A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another* (v. 34).

A. Here, we may say, our Lord wishes to speak some special parting words, and He begins with a commandment quite new. Till now the law has been: *Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself* (Levit. xix.). The Jews in their corrupt tradition had promulgated the doctrine, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy* (St. Matt. v.). Our Lord had denounced and anathematised this corruption: *But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you* (St. Matt. v.). He had preached publicly in Jerusalem a day or two ago in the hearing of the Priests and Rulers that the second commandment is like to the first: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (St. Matt. xxii.). But now that the time of grace and plentiful redemption is come, He sets before His disciples a far higher standard: *Love one another, as I have loved you.*

B. *Love one another, as I have loved you.*

As, then, we have to do according to this Model, we must of necessity halt here to study a little what manner of love our Saviour has had for us. St. Paul will here be a help to us, for he has given us a detailed description

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. True he is speaking of charity, but *God is charity*; and the Heart of Jesus is charity. Let us then attend to St. Paul's words for a little while.

#### A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

##### 1. The Heart of Jesus is *patient*.

*Patient*, as we see from the Latin, is only another word for suffering. The Heart of our Lord is a suffering Heart. His love is a suffering love. We sometimes are kind and charitable as far as we can be *conveniently*, that is, till charity begins to cost, and brings suffering.

2. The Heart of Jesus is *kind*: in deeds, words, thoughts.

If we give an alms, that is a kind deed. We must not spoil the kind deed by unkind words or unkind thoughts. St. Peter teaches that we must do kindness *without murmuring* (iv. 9). *My son, in thy good deeds make no complaint, and when thou givest anything, add not grief by an evil word* (Eccclus. xviii.).

3. The Heart of Jesus *envieth not*, is *not ambitious*, *seeketh not its own*.

He stood in the background, and put His Apostles forward. They were to do greater things than Himself; and to reap the fruits of His toil. *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour* (St. John iv.).

The people would have made Him King, but He hid Himself. He did not hide Himself when they made Him a mock King, and dressed Him as a fool. He lived not for self. He annihilated Himself, and lived only to give glory to God and peace to men.

##### 4. The Heart of Jesus *dealeth not perversely*.

*Perversely*.—The original word has been differently rendered in different versions. A man is perverse when he does mischief for miscreant's sake. Again, when his temporal interests might benefit if he acted aright, but still from spite or malice he elects to do wrong. It is

perverse also to rake up offences long ago repented of and forgiven. The Pharisees were perverse, who, not content with losing Heaven themselves, would not suffer others to enter.

Our Lord does not perversely rob us of our reward because we succeed not; He looks to our efforts. He does not punish mistakes as sins. He does not recall words we said in the past, after we have repented of them. *We* sometimes, if we do not like an order given, take advantage of some ambiguous word, and execute the command too literally, so as to cause trouble. Our Lord does not take advantage of our mistakes; even if we ask for a stone, He will not give us a stone, but bread.

##### 5. The Heart of Jesus is *not puffed up*.

A body puffed up is larger than it ought to be, not through a healthy growth, but swollen out by vapours and bad humours. Pride (*Sapientia*) puffs up the soul, making us appear to ourselves something above our proper position. There are only two main positions: the Creator's, and the creature's. If we set ourselves above the position of a creature, we at once make ourselves creators, gods. Hence God's horror of pride. Jesus, though deserving of all honour and glory and benediction, is always *humble of heart*. We, though deserving nothing but *confusion of face*, crave for honour.

##### 6. The Heart of Jesus is *not provoked to anger*.

"He made me angry," we sometimes say of our neighbour; "I am very kind to those who are kind to me, but he made me angry." Our Saviour tells us that heathens reach this degree of goodness. He wants us to go much further, and to love those who wrong us. He did so.

St. Peter writes: *Servants, be subject to your masters, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward* (1 St. Peter ii.). St. Paul says with reason, that *he who loveth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the law*; because to love our neighbour properly, as Christ loves, we must have

many other virtues. For instance, we must be meek, since true charity is not provoked to anger.

7. The Heart of Jesus thinketh no evil.

St. Paul writes: *Thou dost the things which thou judgest.*

The innocent believe others to be innocent. Corrupted souls suspect others. What St. Paul writes of the use of meats, is true also in other ways. *All things are clean to the clean, but to them that are defiled and unbelievers nothing is clean, but both their mind and their conscience is defiled* (Titus i. 15).

8. The Heart of Jesus rejoiceth not in iniquity.

On the contrary, He mourns night and day over the sins of those who hate Him. We are tempted to be glad if one whom we dislike disgraces himself by a sin.

9. The Heart of Jesus rejoiceth in the truth.

He is Himself truth, and must love truth. He wishes all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. He knows that without truth there is no sanctity or salvation. We must have a zeal for the spread of truth.

Have we got so far that we wish the whole truth against ourselves to be known at least in confession? Do we find ourselves in daily life taking extravagant pains to conceal the truth with regard to our social position, or some personal defect?

10. The Heart of Jesus beareth all things, endureth all things (*portat, otreíet, sustinet, ítroféret*). The Greek text helps us to see the difference between bearing and enduring. A beast of burden is under a heavy load to bear it, or carry it (*portat*). A man lying under a heap of ruins is there enduring the weight (*ítroféret*).

*Portare* means to bear or carry. St. Paul exhorts us to bear or carry each other's burdens. Mothers carry helpless children in their arms. Our Saviour helps the frail and the tempted to prevent their falling, thus carrying them in His hands.

*Sustinere* means to endure. The Heart of Jesus endures all the slights that we heap upon Him, and still loves us.

11. The Heart of Jesus believeth all things.

It is a great mystery that our Saviour can forget our past faithlessness, and shut His eyes to our future fickleness, so as to give full belief to our present resolves not to offend Him.

We, because we do not love much, find it hard to believe the promises of our Lord. They seem too good to be true. Neither are men who love not, willing to believe what great gifts God has given to His Church, such as the Blessed Eucharist, the Infallibility of His Vicar, the motherly care of Holy Mary.

12. The Heart of Jesus hopeth all things. He hopes against hope. A good mother hopes for her prodigal when all others despair of him. How many are now saints in Heaven who would have been abandoned, as past all hope, by a weak love!

13. The love of the Heart of Jesus never falleth away, never fails, never changes. In Heaven there will be no hope, no faith, but love will live for ever.

#### STATION XXXIII.

*By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another* (v. 35).

A. We must examine ourselves very diligently by this test. If we are seen in a Catholic church, men say that we are Catholics. We want a more sure test in order to be certain that we are disciples of Christ; the more so as in these days race is set against race, and class against class. Nay, those who belong to the same class are subdivided into sets. "He does not belong to our set. I cannot possibly introduce him to my family. This is the law of the Medes and Persians."

If we, too, rigidly follow the law of the Medes and Persians here below, is there not danger that in the next world we may be classed with Medes and Persians and heathens and publicans? Our Lord's love for us was not

hemmed in by any narrow fences. It travelled over the heads of the refined and the respectable to reach the lost and the outcast.

## STATION XXXIV.

*Simon Peter saith to Him : Lord, whither goest Thou ? Jesus answered : Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now ; but thou shalt follow hereafter (v. 36).*

A. St. Peter, though not yet sufficiently grounded in humility and mistrust of himself, has a strong love for his Divine Master, and is not resigned to that word which He has just spoken : *Whither I go you cannot come*. Blessed Apostle, obtain for us some share of thy love for Jesus Christ and thy desire to be ever near to Him, and a great sorrow if we are not where He is.

Tradition tells us that once again in after years St. Peter said to Jesus this same word : *Lord, whither goest Thou ?* He was leaving Rome discouraged at seeing no prospect of doing good there, when suddenly he saw his Master coming on the road towards him, and in his surprise, cried out : "*Dominus, quo vadis ?*" — *Lord, whither goest Thou ?* "I am going to Rome to be crucified," was the answer. From which word St. Peter understood that the promised time was come when he should die for his Lord, and therefore he returned to Rome, and soon after died fastened to his cross.<sup>1</sup>

B. *Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter*. St. Peter presumes rashly that even now he can die for his Master. Later on he became more like the picture drawn by himself : *fixed in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, merciful, modest, humble* (1 St. Peter iii.).

St. Francis Xavier wrote from the Indies that he found that there was a wide distance between desires of martyrdom formed during prayer in his room, and unshaken fortitude when the sword is uplifted to strike. When the Holy Spirit shall have come down on St. Peter, he will have courage enough to follow his Master to death.

<sup>1</sup> May the piety of the faithful be moved to restore and beautify the little church which commemorates this apparition, for it seems neglected and desolate.

C. There is another reason why St. Peter was not permitted as yet to die. His Divine Master had said by the well at Sichar : *See the countries, for they are white for the harvest* (St. John iv.). There will be a great harvest ready after the work of to-morrow, and the workmen will be few. St. Peter must do his share as a fisher of men and as Vicar of Christ.

"Grant us grace, merciful and compassionate Lord, to do faithfully the work Thou hast allotted to us ; and then, when Thou wilt, and where Thou wilt, and in the manner Thou wilt, call us to follow Thee into Thy Kingdom by a holy death."

## STATION XXXV.

*Peter saith to Him : Why cannot I follow Thee now ? I will lay down my life for Thee. Jesus answered him : Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me ? Amen, Amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice (xiii. 37, 38).*

From St. John's narrative we gather that our Saviour uttered this sad warning before the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. After the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, He again, as we shall see, repeated the forewarning. Holy Church teaches us all to approach the Holy Table, striking our breast, and saying, "Lord, I am not worthy". Our Blessed Lord may have wished by speaking this solemn prophecy to have checked in St. Peter presumption and self-reliance, in order that he might receive the Bread of Heaven in the spirit of humility and with a contrite heart.

## SCENE IV.

## PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

A little thought must be here devoted to the important question, at what time during the proceedings in the Cenaculum did our Blessed Saviour institute the Blessed Eucharist ?

I. St. Matthew writes : "*COENANTIBUS ILLIS*". WHILST THEY WERE AT SUPPER, Jesus took bread and blessed and broke and gave it to His disciples, and the rest.

*And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this (c. xxvi.).*

St. Mark's words are: "MANDUCANTIBUS ILLIS." WHILEST THEY WERE EATING, Jesus took bread, etc.

*And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them, etc. (c. xiv.).*

St. Luke writes: *Taking bread, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying, etc.*

*In like manner the chalice also, AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED, saying, etc. (c. xxii.).*

The Roman Liturgy, which is supposed to have been drawn up under the guidance of St. Peter, uses these words: "Who the day before He suffered took bread, etc. And in like manner, AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED, He took the chalice," etc. Father Coleridge observes that as these words are supposed to be St. Peter's, and have been handed down under the guardianship of Holy Church, they seem to have almost as much sanction as the Gospel narrative.

The special revelation made to him St. Paul records in these words: *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said, etc.*

*In like manner also the chalice, AFTER HE HAD SUPPED (1 Cor. xi.).*

St. John, according to his custom, is silent about the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, because others had sufficiently recorded it. But, as we shall see later, he gives a very important clue which may help us to fix the time of the Institution.

In these texts, then, we find some apparent discrepancy which requires to be harmonised. For St. Matthew and St. Mark, on one side, seem to place the Consecration during supper; while St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Roman Missal, on the other hand, place the Consecration after supper.

In solution of this difficulty two theories are offered.

1. Some commentators, adhering rigidly to the letter, conclude that the consecration of the bread took place during the supper, and the consecration of the chalice after. This opinion, which to our minds, familiarised with the character and the ritual of the Holy Mass, seems quite improbable, is yet held by theologians of very high authority.

2. As it is certain from St. Paul, St. Luke, and the Roman Liturgy, that the chalice was consecrated after the supper, the more generally received opinion, and the one which agrees with the received notion among the faithful is, that the bread and the wine were both consecrated at the end of the supper.

As, however, some of the most eminent theologians, as has been just said, hold the first opinion, that the bread was consecrated during the supper, and the wine after, it may be well to consider briefly the reason that moves them to adopt a theory which seems to go against the mind of the faithful and the practice of Holy Church in the Adorable Sacrifice.

Their main reason then for maintaining that opinion—

perhaps their sole reason—is that it seems to accord better with the letter of the Gospel texts.

For, as we have seen, St. Matthew and St. Mark state that *while they were eating—while they were at supper—*Jesus consecrated the bread.

On the other hand, St. Luke, St. Paul, and the form in the Roman Liturgy, ascribed to St. Peter, state that He consecrated the chalice *after He had supped—after they had supped.*

Those, therefore, who hold the first opinion, argue in this way: "St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us that there was a consecration while they were eating; St. Luke and St. Paul, on the other hand, write that the consecration of the chalice took place after supper. To reconcile these two statements, we must necessarily say that the consecration of the bread took place during supper, and the consecration of the wine after."

Those who hold the second opinion, that the Holy Sacrifice was a separate and distinct service after the supper was ended, feel a strong repugnance (1) to believe that our Lord separated the two consecrations, and still more (2) that He introduced the consecration of the bread during the supper without any special preparation for it, and without the observance of any solemn rite. They, therefore, have looked about for another way of reconciling the words of the sacred writers.

They observe then (1) that St. Matthew and St. Mark, who seem to place the consecration during supper, do not at all separate the two consecrations. If their words really mean that there was a consecration during the supper, and if we are to follow their text literally, we ought to say that both consecrations took place while they were eating.

For St. Mark writes, *Whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread, and then, without any break, continues, and having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them, etc.* St. Matthew, in like manner: *Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, etc., and then at once adds, And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, etc.*

Now if we turn to St. Luke and St. Paul, and to the Roman Liturgy, we find (1) that neither do they separate the two consecrations; (2) that they do not state that any consecration took place *while they were eating.* St. Luke's words are, *And taking bread, He gave thanks, and then immediately after, without any break, In like manner the chalice also, after He had supped.* St. Paul's and St. Peter's account agrees with this.

If St. Luke had written that He took the bread during supper, and the wine after He had supped, the first opinion would be established beyond doubt; but this he does not say. He does not specify when our Lord consecrated the bread, but, apparently, puts the two consecrations together, and says explicitly that one of them took place after the supper.

Consequently, if we fix our mind on the letter of the different texts, we find all the Evangelists so far in agreement, that no one of them separates the two consecrations. So that if we had

only St. Matthew and St. Mark to guide us, we should say that if there was any consecration at all during the supper, both consecrations took place at that time. If, on the other hand, we had only St. Luke's and St. Paul's narratives, and the Roman Liturgy to guide us, we should say that both consecrations took place after the supper.

How then are the words of St. Paul and St. Luke and the Liturgy, *after they had supped, or after He had supped*, to be reconciled with St. Mark's words, "*Manducantibus illis*"—*while they were eating*, and St. Matthew's words, "*Cenantibus illis*"—*while they were supping*?

To the words of St. Luke and St. Paul, *after He had supped*, only one meaning can be given. It is quite impossible to force them to mean *during supper*.

But is it impossible to interpret St. Matthew and St. Mark so as to bring them into harmony with St. Luke and St. Paul? Those who hold the second, and generally received opinion, think not.

For (1) we have been taught that St. Matthew and St. Mark oftentimes do not intend to fix the time and place of events or discourses, but only to chronicle what is more important, namely, that Jesus did work such a cure, or pronounce such a discourse.

Then (2) it seems to be commonly admitted, that the phrases, *Cenantibus illis, manducantibus illis*, need not necessarily be rendered, "whilst they were eating, or supping," but might mean what we, in our language, mean when we say that something happened at dinner, at supper.

For instance, we often read in published reports, that at a certain dinner speeches were made, and from custom we interpret that these speeches were made, not while they were eating, but at the end of the dinner, or, as men used to say half a century ago, when the cloth was removed.

Consequently, if we assume that St. Matthew and St. Mark on this occasion, as on so many others, do not intend to give the exact moment when the consecration took place, but merely wish to record the great fact that at the Last Supper, or on the occasion of that Supper, and while they were in the Cenacle, the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist took place, we can in this way bring all the sacred writers into harmony, and we are not obliged to clash with the mind of the faithful or the practice of Holy Church ever since. For surely, without an infallible declaration from the Apostolic See, it would be difficult to induce the faithful to believe that the consecration took place whilst they were eating at table, without any special preparation and without any sacred ceremonies; and that the two consecrations were not united together as parts of one Holy Sacrifice; but effected quite separately, one during supper, and one after.

In the very passage which we are considering, we find in St. Mark's text some words which show us very clearly the

necessity of not accepting hastily the sense that seems to lie on the surface. For with regard to the consecration of the chalice, he writes: *And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And He said to them, This is My Blood of the New Testament.*

If we were obliged to adhere rigidly to the letter, we should have to say that the Apostles drank of the chalice before our Lord pronounced the words of consecration; an interpretation which could in no wise be admitted.

There is only one more remark to be made.

The words of St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Liturgy, *In like manner, after He had supped, or after they had supped*, are clearly capable of two interpretations. They might mean that our Lord effected one consecration during supper, and then another similar act of transubstantiation after. This is the interpretation followed by those who hold the first opinion. But the words *in like manner*, may also mean that the second miracle of consecration was not only wrought after the manner of the first, but also at the same time as the first, that is, that our Lord consecrated the chalice, as well as the bread, after supper.

This interpretation accords better with the second opinion, which is the one generally held in the Church, that the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist took place when the supper was ended.

II. Those who adopt this second opinion, for the most part, take also for granted that our Blessed Saviour in consecrating made use of special rites and ceremonies, which were to serve the Apostles as a model to be imitated in the Church.

This theory is supported by what we read in the revelations of some holy contemplatives and mystics.

It is the view that will be followed in these contemplations on the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

III. A further question still remains for discussion.

Those who believe that the Blessed Eucharist was instituted after the supper, commonly assume that our Blessed Lord offered up the Holy Sacrifice after the washing of the feet, and before the long farewell discourse; and on this account many of them take for granted that Judas received the Holy Communion with the feast.

Father Coleridge has pointed out a serious objection to this commonly accepted theory, and is, apparently, the first to offer a new conjecture, which seems very probable and satisfactory.

He grounds his reasoning on the closing verse of St. John's fourteenth chapter, the first chapter of the farewell discourse. Our Lord there says: *But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.*

Many commentators, when they come to this verse, are obliged to say: *It is a labour in my sight. I studied that I might know this thing* (Psalm lxxii.).



The difficulty lies in the word, *Arise, let us go hence*; for the question at once occurs, whither did they go?

Three answers are offered by the older interpreters.

(a) They went to Gethsemani.

But (1) this would oblige us to believe that this greater part of the long discourse, and the prayer also that follows, was made in the streets, and on the road to Gethsemani.

And (2) what is more decisive, the supposition cannot be reconciled with what we read at the end of the discourse and the prayer, in the commencement of chapter xviii.: *When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the Brook Cedron, where there was a garden. For from these words it is clear that He did not leave the Cenaculum till the prayer was ended.*

(b) Others try to solve the difficulty by saying that they all rose to start for Gethsemani, but, as friends often do, lingered round their Master in the Guest-room, or in the hall.

But it seems improbable that when our Lord had still three-fourths of this most solemn and important discourse to utter, He would bid them arise, and prepare to go, as if He had said nearly all that He wanted to say.

(c) St. Chrysostom, like so many others, is at a loss, and offers the conjecture that our Saviour, seeing the Apostles alarmed because He had just told them that *the Prince of this world* was coming, took them to another more retired part of the building, where they would feel more secure.

Father Coleridge's new solution agrees in part with St. Chrysostom's, but he differs from the great Saint in one important point. His suggestion is, that at the word of Jesus they all rose, and went either to another part of the large Guest-chamber, where a sanctuary had been prepared, or to another part of the building, where there was a suitable oratory, and that there our Lord instituted and offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

This theory seems to explain our Saviour's words, *Arise, let us go*, better than any of the others; and at the same time it harmonises very well with what we read in the writings of privileged contemplatives concerning the first Holy Mass.

Moreover, it is in keeping with St. John's usual method. He is silent about the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, because the other Evangelists have recorded this important fact; but he adds a few words omitted by them which indicate the precise time at which our Lord celebrated the Holy Mysteries.

Father Coleridge's view seems indeed to go somewhat against St. Ignatius of Loyola, who in his Exercises places the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist before the last discourse; but St. Ignatius' object is rather to propose matter for holy meditation, than to determine critically the exact chronological order. In this he follows the method of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Moreover, even in Father Coleridge's supposition, the greater part of the farewell discourse follows the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Assuming, then, Father Coleridge's conjecture to be correct, the first chapter of the discourse (c. xiv.) is a preparation for the Most Holy Sacrament. The rest of the discourse, and the prayer, form part of the Post-Communion thanksgiving service.

We may now return to our study of the Gospel narrative, and resume our contemplations at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of St. John, considering this first discourse, which it contains, as a preparation for the first Holy Mass and for Holy Communion, and also for the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which the Apostles were about to receive.

We shall observe how our Lord's words are ever increasing faith, hope, and charity in their souls, which, it is needless to say, are the best preparation for the Most Holy Eucharist.

#### STATION I.

#### THE DISCOURSE BEFORE THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

*Let not your heart be troubled* (St. John xiv. 1).

A. The Apostles were in trouble of mind, and not without reason:

1. Because our Lord had told them that He was going.  
2. And that He was going whither they could not follow.

3. Because He had said that Peter would follow later, and had not given any assurance to the rest.

4. Also because He had told them that one of them was about to betray Him.

5. And lastly, because He had said that Peter would deny Him before the cock-crow.

Therefore our Lord begins to prepare them for the Holy Eucharist by saying, *Let not your heart be troubled*.

B. What was the effect of that word? Did it give peace to their souls? This much we know. *The word of the Lord is living and effectual*. In this respect, among others, His word differs much from ours.

We often say to men, *Peace, peace, and there is no peace* (Jerem. vi.). Our words are often very cheap and very worthless, because we have done nothing to earn grace and blessing and heavenly power for our words. But when our Lord speaks to the troubled waters He has already paid a large price for the grace He wishes to give

to us, and consequently the voice of the Lord is in power: the voice of the Lord is in magnificence (Psalm xxviii.). In an instant the winds are hushed; and there (is) made a great calm (St. Matt. viii.). The Jews were wrong, therefore, when they said to Moses, *Speak thou to us and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us lest we die* (Exodus xx. 19). "No, rather do Thou, most merciful Jesus, speak to our souls, for we remember Thy saying: *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life*" (St. John vi.).

## STATION II.

*You believe in God, believe also in Me (v. 1).*

As we are assuming, He wishes to prepare their souls for their first Holy Communion, and He begins by helping them to an increase of faith. The Apostles have been confused and troubled because their Master had said quite lately: *The Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified*. He desires therefore to invigorate their faith in Him, and to prepare them for the great temptation coming; so that they may believe firmly that He is more than Man, and therefore that even if He be crucified, all will be well restored.

*You believe in God, believe in Me.*

This is one of the many sentences whereby He teaches that He is God, equal to the Father.

## STATION III.

*In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you (v. 2).*

A. They had heard that Peter was to follow Him; and were in fear that they might be excluded from their Father's house. He wishes therefore to bring back hope and love before Holy Communion, and says: *There are many mansions*, that is, there is in My Father's house ample room for you all and for many more beside. Otherwise I would

have told you, that ("quia") I go to prepare a place for you. That is to say, if there were not already many mansions and ample room, I should have told you that I shall go and prepare a place for you.

B. Another explanation of this passage is given by those who make "*quia*" mean *because*. If there had not been ample space for all of you, I would surely have told you; I could not have deceived you on this point, *because*, in reality, I am going away from you to make all ready for you; to put the mansions already prepared into complete order for your reception. It was by His Death and Resurrection and Ascension that our Blessed Saviour made all quite ready, and opened the gates of Heaven for us.

## STATION IV.

*And if I shall go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be (v. 3).*

A. 1. *I will come again after My Resurrection.*

2. *I will come again in the Holy Eucharist.*

3. *I will come again and take you to Myself at the hour of your death—if you are then ready.*

4. If you are not then quite ready, but need more purification, I will come and take you to Myself for ever, the moment that the last farthing of your debt is paid in Purgatory. For My own sake I will not delay.

B. *That where I am you also may be.*

"*Attendite*." This word comes from the very depth of our Lord's Heart. All His suffering Life has been devoted to this object; His bitter Death will be offered for this end. For this He gives us His Body and His Blood in the Blessed Eucharist. To the attainment of this end our Lady also will devote herself. Full easily He might create as our eternal home a Paradise unspeakably beautiful. But nothing can content His Heart but this, *that where I*

*am you also may be. My delights (are) to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii.).

C. If then He says to us: "*Delectare in Domino*"—*Take delight in the Lord* (Psalm xxxvi.), He, as our good God, our Father, our Redeemer, has first taken great delight in His children. We are not to be the first to love: *not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us* (1 St. John iv.).

D. If this is our Lord's wish that throughout eternity, *where I am you also may be*, how fervently we ought to answer in the words of Ethai to David: *In what place soever thou shalt be, lord my king, either in death or in life, there shall thy servant be* (2 Kings xv.).

E. *That where I am you also may be.*

"*Attendite.*" Stay here a little longer to dwell also on this thought, that, if He wishes us to be with Him now in poverty, in labour, in lowliness, it is only that the union may be eternal in His Father's home.

#### STATION V.

*And whither I go you know, and the way you know* (v. 4).

A. These words are to do away with the sadness left by His former words: *You shall seek Me, and whither I go you cannot come*. He is going to open His Sacred Heart to them as a friend to friends.

We now know, even better than the Apostles then did, whither our Lord was going, and the way by which we must follow.

"*Passio Christi, conforta me*; strengthen me that I may with courage and a cheerful heart deny myself and take up my cross, and follow Thee, Lord Jesus."

#### STATION VI.

*Thomas saith to Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith to him: I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me* (vv. 5—6).

A. Here, as in so many other instances, our Blessed Saviour to a material question gives a spiritual answer, which at first seems unsatisfactory; but the more it is studied, the more it comforts and enlightens and elevates. *Suscipe corda. Veni lumen cordium.*

B. *I am the way and the truth and the life.*

"*Attendite.*" Pause and listen, in this nineteenth century of bewilderment and confusion, to these saving words of our Blessed Saviour. The boasted strong minds of our day are *ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth* (2 Timothy iii.). *Children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine* (Ephes. iv. 14). It is our part to pray most earnestly that they who at present *will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, and are turned unto fables*, may at last come back to Jesus Christ, and give heed to His words: *I am the way, the truth, the life*. I am Man, and I am God; I have come down to your level in order to climb up with you the mountain of God, and to make you a sharer in My Divinity. Join yourselves to Me; learn of Me: *for no man cometh to the Father but by Me*. Through Mary to Jesus; through Jesus, the visible Man-God, to the most holy and invisible Trinity. All men would easily arrive at truth if they would keep in mind His promise, that in His Church there shall be a path to truth so plain and straight that even fools shall find it (Isaias xxxv.).

#### STATION VII.

*If you had known Me you would have known My Father also; and from henceforth you shall know Him, and you have seen Him* (v. 7).

Here our Blessed Saviour raises up their souls to a right conception of His Divinity. He tells them plainly that knowing Him they know the Father.

More and more He is loving to the end, and dealing with them not as servants, but as beloved friends, He is

largely increasing *their Faith, their Hope, their Love*, as a preparation for their first Holy Communion.

Imprint, O Lord, also in our hearts lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, and a true contrition for our sins.

## STATION VIII.

*Philip saith to Him : Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us (v. 8).*

A. The Apostles believed our Lord to be the Messias, and the Son of God ; but they did not all as yet realise with a vivid faith that He was " God of God and Light of light and consubstantial with the Father ".

*I believe, O Lord, help Thou my unbelief (St. Matt.).*

B. *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*

Still, from this request of Philip we can draw great humiliation for ourselves. For, as the words of our Lord are more and more creating a clean heart in him, his one desire now is to know the Father; and there is true charity also in his soul, for what he wishes for himself he wishes for all : *Lord, show us the Father.*

Is our prayer to God such as this : *Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us ?* Sometimes men say, " Give me health and I ask no more, " " Give me an income that will keep me out of debt, and I am quite content, " " Deliver me from this one disgrace hanging over my head in consequence of my folly, and I ask for nothing further " . Philip *has chosen the better part*. The bliss of Heaven, our Lord says, is that *they know Thee, My Father, and Him Whom Thou hast sent*. Therefore, St. Philip's prayer is a most wise one. " Give us to know our Father Who is in Heaven, give us here a beginning of our eternal bliss, and that is sufficient. "

We may be sure that our Blessed Saviour was not displeased with this petition of Philip's, even though there was imperfection in it. He had shown a special mark of affection to him before the miracle of the loaves, when He

consulted him : *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ?* (St. John vi.). And when the Gentiles on Palm Sunday wished to see Jesus, it was to Philip they addressed themselves. Perchance, Father à Lapidé conjectures, because they perceived in his countenance and the tone of his voice a special gentleness and kindness and simplicity which attracted them. He may have been in his character, like his comrade Nathaniel, whom he drew to our Lord, *an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile* (St. John i.). However this may be, we are sure that it was with great kindness that our Lord answered him.

## STATION IX.

*Jesus saith to him : So long a time have I been with you : and have you not known Me ? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Show us the Father ? (v. 9).*

A. *He that seeth Me, seeth the Father.*

These same words our Saviour had cried out aloud as He was leaving Jerusalem on the Palm Sunday : *He that seeth Me, seeth My Father*. But then they did not make impression. Now He is communicating much more light to His Apostles, and increasing *their Faith* as an immediate preparation for the great mystery of the Blessed Eucharist B. *So long a time have I been with you : and have you not known Me ?*

Not more than three years had elapsed since Philip was called to know Jesus.

" Alas ! my Lord and my God, how much more reason Thou hast to say to me from Thy tabernacle : *So long a time have I been with you : and have you not known Me ?* " (St. John xiv.). *Forty years have I been near to this generation, and I said : Always they go astray in their hearts* " (Psalm xciv.).

## STATION X.

*Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself. But the Father Who abideth in Me, He doth the works. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? (vv. 10—11).*

Every word is strengthening in the soul of Philip and the other Apostles faith in our Lord's Divinity and His intimate and essential union with His Father, and making them more ready for the Most Holy Sacrament. *Credo, Domine, Credo.*

## STATION XI.

*Otherwise believe for the very works' sake (v. 12).*

To raise their faith and render it more vivid, He reminds them of the stupendous miracles they have witnessed. And then, to make them see more clearly what a value He sets on faith, He adds:

## STATION XII.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do (v. 12).*

A. "*O vos omnes. Attendite.*" We must pause here to wonder at the marvellous effect of Divine faith. By believing firmly in our Lord, we become in a manner one with Him, and share His Divine powers, and do the wondrous works He does.

B. Still more wonderful and beautiful and loveable is the humility of our Blessed Lord's Heart. *Charity, St. Paul writes, is not ambitious, seeketh not its own.* Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, does not, as we have seen, seek the first place. His disciples shall do greater works than He did. He trod the wine-press alone. He went through His Passion alone; for His Blessed Mother, the only one who shared it, was as a second self to Him, half of His

Soul. Alone and in sorrow He sowed the seed; but He has no wish to reap the harvest alone. *It is one man that soweth, He had said to His Apostles, and it is another that reapeth.* I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour. *Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours (St. John iv.).* This thought was to keep His Apostles humble in the midst of their marvellous success. After the first discourse of St. Peter, many more became disciples, than Christ had won during His three years of preaching. And even an ordinary priest, when he absolves many, as so often happens, does, in a way, a greater work than our Lord had done when He uttered these words; greater, that is, in this sense, that to absolve many is a greater work than to absolve few. So, too, when the Holy Father rules and teaches the whole Church, he may be said in a certain sense to be doing a greater work than our Lord did.

C. *The works that I do he shall do, and greater than these shall he do.*

"*Attendite.*" What lesson do we need so much as this: to practise humility of heart, to be content with labouring and sowing, and to be willing that others shall reap, or at least share with us in the reaping? *Fac fieri* was a word of advice which a spiritual guide used to give to all in authority: get things done by others; do not be anxious to do all yourself. Be content, like our Saviour, that others should do greater work than you have done.

## STATION XIII.

*Because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask Me any thing in My Name, that will I do (vv. 12—14).*

A. *Whatsoever you shall ask, that will I do.* Now, in the second place, our Blessed Saviour, as a preparation for the Blessed Eucharist, strengthens Divine

*Hope* in the hearts of His Apostles. Full of the truest and most tender affection for His brethren, and for all the members of His fallen race, His Sacred Heart pours out this most consoling promise: I am leaving you, but ere I go, I make this covenant with you, that: *Whosoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, that will I do.* So that He may well say a little later: *It is expedient for you that I go.*

B. Mark, too, how He inculcates again and again that He is one with His Father, and yet a distinct Person: *Whosoever you ask My Father, that will I do.*

C. *Whosoever you ask in My Name.*

We must understand this word. A priest absolves in the *Name of Christ.* He speaks as Christ's delegate and proxy, and therefore says: *I absolve thee.* For the Scribes were right when in their hearts they thought: *Who can forgive sins but God only?* (St. Mark ii.). If a man forgives sin, it can only be as God's vicar and delegate and *alter ego.* From this example we can understand in some measure what our Blessed Saviour means when He tells us to ask in His name. We are to go to prayer as His delegates, dressed, as it were, in His garments: not to get from His Father surreptitiously the blessing that belongs to our elder brother, but authorised and commissioned by Him to ask in His name and through His merits, as if they were our own, for the blessing that belongs to Him, but which He wishes to share with us.

D. *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Oh, when shall our cry be heard: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name?* When shall that name, so full of comfort and joy and hope, be a reality to us? When shall the great desire of our heart be in all our works, that our Father may be glorified in us?

E. *If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do.* Here again He reveals His Divinity. We may either pray to His Father or to Him.

"O most compassionate Saviour, remember Thy promise.

We humbly ask in Thy Name, and by Thy Name of Jesus, that we may know Thee better, and firmly believe in Thee, true God and true Man."

#### STATION XIV.

*If you love Me, keep My Commandments (v. 15).*

Here, too, is a good preparation for the Heavenly Banquet. He is aware that the words He has spoken are warming their hearts, and increasing their love; and therefore He throws in this word of instruction to teach them, and to teach us, that the chiefest and truest expression of love is obedience to God's laws, and that we must not believe in any love that does not keep His Commandments.

#### STATION XV.

THE SOLEMN PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST TO HIS CHURCH.

*And I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth (v. 16).*

A. This is another outpouring of the tenderness of His Sacred Heart. Yes, indeed, truly did St. John write that our Divine Master was loving to the end. He is going because it is necessary and expedient; but He will ask for another Comforter Who shall do for His bereaved Apostles even more than He has done.

B. *He shall give you another Paraclete.*

*Paraclete* (παράκλητος) means one called to my assistance. Hence an advocate, a counsellor, a comforter.

Most openly now and confidentially our Blessed Saviour is speaking to His future Vicar and His delegates. Now for the first time He utters that great promise which is the infeasible charter of His future Church: *I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity, the Spirit of Truth; not to remain with you, as I have*

done, only for three years, but to abide with you for ever. This great compact He repeats *four times* more before He leaves the supper-room; once before He institutes the Blessed Eucharist, and three times afterwards. What wonder that He again and again repeats the great promise? For He knows that this assured assistance of the Holy Ghost which is to abide with the Apostolic office, and teach the Church through the Apostolic voice, is the grand and glorious outcome of His Sacred Passion, and the undying life of His future Church.

*Five times then*, as has been said, on this last night of His life He repeats to His down-hearted Apostles this life-giving assurance:

I. *I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth* (xiv. 16, 17). Then knowing that His Apostles were to be the future teachers, and that men might very naturally think that they had forgotten much of their Master's teaching, He adds:

II. *These things I have spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you* (xiv. 25). In this word there was wonderful comfort and encouragement for the bereaved Apostles, but it is equally consoling and precious for us also to know that Christ's Apostolic Delegate shall always have brought back to his mind the teaching of Christ Jesus; and shall be taught all truth and will teach all truth.

Then seeing that, notwithstanding so many comforting words, His Apostles are still sorrowful because He is leaving them, again He speaks to them:

III. *Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you* (xvi. 6, 7).

In these reassuring words our most loving Redeemer teaches His afflicted Apostles, that when the Holy Ghost comes they will be in a much better position than they are at present. For He, while on earth, has been only preparing the way. He has been teaching them, as it were, first lessons, and from outside; and consequently the truths which He has uttered have not sunk deep enough into their minds, nor been thoroughly understood. But when the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon them, He will bring home to their inmost hearts every truth, and fill them with vivid faith and firm hope and ardent love.

We must then most heartily join in the cry of Holy Church *Veni, Creator Spiritus. Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*

Now, surely, we might think, our Lord has promised enough; but no, He is revealing a truth most essential and fundamental, and therefore yet again He cheers their hearts with this glorious guarantee:

IV. *I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak, and the things that are to come He shall show you* (xvi. 12).

(a) In these words our Lord goes beyond what He has said before. He has already promised that the Holy Ghost will bring back to their minds all that they have heard from Him during the last three years; but now He tells them that there are many other truths which He wishes and intends to communicate to them, but for which they are not as yet prepared; that all these truths the Holy Ghost will reveal to them; and, as they questioned Him two days before about things to come, He now adds that the Holy Spirit will also show them the things to come.

(b) And it is well worth notice that here again our Lord says of the Holy Spirit what He has often said of Himself, that *He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear He shall speak*. What a lesson for us poor, insignificant, small-minded men! Happy shall we be if we become convinced and persuaded that when we speak the words of God or words inspired by God, words that begin with God and by Him are happily ended, we are doing good; but that if we are speaking words of our own, we are the blind trying to lead the blind.

Often times our ambition is to be original. We, who are created by God, sometimes delude ourselves that we can utter wiser words than God has revealed; that our conceptions will be more beautiful and more sublime than the thoughts of the Infinite God Who created our littleness. There would not be on the face of the earth one false religion, if all who profess to teach Gospel truths followed the lesson taught in these words: *He shall not speak of Himself*.

(c) And in ordinary life, too, is it not one main cause of the widespread mischief and havoc which prevails, that habitually we foolish men give advice rashly, and without pausing for one moment to consult the Holy Ghost? We advise men to take revenge, to go to law, to spend money in luxuries, to refuse an alms, to read bad books, to buy houses, to make investments. On every subject, in fine, we love to give advice rashly and recklessly, so that while our Saviour says of the Holy Spirit, *He shall not speak of Himself, the story of our usual, ordinary habits might be, "He always speaks from himself"'. With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart* (Jerem. xlii.).

(d) Holy men on earth and the blessed in Heaven are filled with a sorrowful amazement when they meet with this headlong

independence. *The just shall see and fear and shall say : Behold the man that made not God his helper* (Psalm ii.).

"Come, O Holy Spirit, and incline our hearts to abide always under the help of the Most High (Psalm xc.), that so all our words and words may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended."

(c) And now having guaranteed that, under this teaching of the Holy Ghost, His Apostles shall not only forget nothing of what they have learnt during the last three years, but shall understand thoroughly many truths which He has not yet fully unfolded to them—in fact, shall know all truth, and have a prophetic knowledge of many things to come—then at last He reveals why He is pouring graces so lavishly upon them, and explains His designs respecting them, and the great work He intends them to do.

*V. When the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning* (St. John xv.).

Here at length our Lord discloses in what way He is about to fulfil the promise made long before to His future Church through Isaiah the Prophet: *A path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way : the unclean shall not pass over it, and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein* (Isaiah xxxv.). He is the Eternal Truth, and one chief desire of His Heart is, as St. Paul tells us, that *all men come to a knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.).

He has pledged Himself that in His Church there shall be a plain and safe path to truth; which no unclean teacher of falsehood shall ever defile; and which shall be so straight and easy that even fools cannot go astray therein. Now on this last night of His life, He reveals how this is to be done, and what this straight path shall be.

His Apostles, who have been taught all truth by the Holy Spirit, shall go and give testimony of Him; but, working conjointly with the Apostles, the Holy Ghost shall also give testimony; so that the Apostle shall be but the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.

Then, too, the Bishops of the Church shall, by the grace of the same Holy Spirit, be inclined to listen to the Apostolic teaching, and to adhere to it. Through them all truth shall reach the great body of the faithful.

The faithful also, the Church Catholic, the whole Christian people, shall, by the same Holy Spirit, be rendered docile and willing to be taught.

By this simple process every man, woman, and child may always share the truth by merely listening like little children to the never-failing teaching which comes to them from the Apostolic voice.

True, indeed, all must become like little children, and let themselves be taught; but taught, not by an erring man, but by the voice of the Apostle, to whom the Lord has promised: (1) That the Holy Spirit will teach him all truth; (2) and that when he teaches, the Holy Ghost will always be with him to guide his teaching. Blessed be God Who has called us *out of darkness into His marvellous light* (1 St. Peter ii.).

By daily use we grow accustomed to the sunlight, and forget what a gift of God it is. So, too, we are apt not to remember with sufficient gratitude the immense grace given to us of possessing always all truth through docility to the Apostolic teaching, while so many others around us sit in darkness, and are carried about by every wind of doctrine (Ephes. iv.); *ever learning and never attaining to a knowledge of truth* (2 Timothy iii.).

We have been digressing in order to bring together all the passages in our Lord's discourse which have reference to the coming of the Holy Ghost, and His office in the future Church. We must now go back to study His words in the order in which they stand.

## STATION XVI.

*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you* (v. 18).

A. His Heart is loving to the end. He heaps words of consolation one upon another. He knows full well that during three years of close familiarity the hearts of His Apostles have been strongly drawn to Him. They lean entirely on Him. The separation is about to be a cruel one. They are to be like sheep among ravening wolves. His Sacred Heart already feels the agony much more than they will do; and He thinks that He cannot say too many words of comfort.

*B. I will not leave you orphans.*

Thus too, when by death one is taken and another left, and all joy and hope seem to be gone out of the life of the survivor, our Blessed Saviour feels the pang more than the bereaved one. *I am with him in tribulation* (Psalm xc.). It was not by His will that sin brought death and all its sorrows into the Paradise He had planned for men (Zach. ii.).



Death that touches you touches the apple of My eye. *Se nascens deicit socium.* At My Birth I gave Myself to be your companion, your yoke-fellow, to bear the yoke with you, to share every burden, and when you are in sorrow, to share with you tear for tear.

C. *I will not leave you orphans.* "I will come to you soon, very soon after My Resurrection, to say *Pax vobis.* Soon also, sooner still, I will come to you in the Most Blessed Sacrament which I am about to institute in order to be always with you. And last of all I will come to you when your work is done on earth, and will take you to Myself."

#### STATION XVII.

*Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more. But you see Me, because I live, and you shall live (v. 19).*

A. *You shall live.*

You shall live by faith. *Blessed they who have not seen and have believed* (St. John xx.). We need not envy those who saw our Lord with the eyes of the body. Far better it is to live by faith; by a living faith to believe in Him and know Him.

B. How grateful our Lord will be to us for ever, if by prayer and by alms and by self-denial and penance and zeal we help men of this world to come out of the darkness and believe in Him.

#### STATION XVIII.

*In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you (v. 20).*

Our Lord has awakened their Faith and Hope. He now warms their hearts with His divine love.

When did friendship find words to express itself such as these are? He sets alongside His intimate and eternal union with His Father, His union with us and ours with Him: *I in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. You in Me* as the branch on the vine; *I in you* as the vine in the branch.

He had already foretold that the Blessed Eucharist would bring about this union. *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him.*

We are amazed at times, and dismayed also, when we read the great commandment: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.* But here we have the explanation why He exacts so much love, for is it not clear that He has first loved us with His whole Heart, and with all His strength?

*Fac, cor dulce Jesu mei, fac ut nos amemus Te.*

#### STATION XIX.

*He that hath My commandments and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him (v. 21).*

A. *He it is that loveth Me.*

Here again, in order to dispose their souls for the Most Blessed Sacrament, He combines instruction with His appeal to their hearts. Not content with awakening affection within them, He carefully teaches them how true love shows itself by faithfully keeping His commandments. He then adds this most powerful argument to move them, to increase love in their hearts: *He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him.* If our poor and small and miserable hearts will love the infinite goodness and loveliness of God, then the Eternal Father and His only Son will, with all their boundless power of loving, love us.

B. *I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.*

It is then our want of love that keeps us in darkness and blindness, and hinders our blessed Lord from manifesting Himself to us.

"*Ab oculis meis munda me.* Cleanse us, O God, from those hidden sins that deaden love in our souls. Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

## STATION XX.

*Judas saith to Him, not the Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world ? (v. 22).*

A. St. Jude has just heard our Lord say : *He that loveth Me, I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him*, and he remembers that a little before He had also said : *The world seeth Me no more. But you see Me*. He is perplexed. Apparently he thinks that our Lord intends to make Himself visible to His Apostles, but not to the rest of men. He does not understand that when Jesus says, *The world seeth Me no more*, He is not speaking of all men on earth, but only of those who belong to the wicked world which He has often denounced. Neither does he comprehend that our Blessed Saviour when He speaks of manifesting Himself, does not mean that He will render Himself visible to the eye, but, through a lively faith, known to the soul.

B. *Judas saith to Him, not the Iscariot.*

Happy, thrice happy the man after whose name the blessed angels can thus add : "Not the traitor," "not the sinner," or if once a sinner, "now quite contrite".

## STATION XXI.

*Jesus answered and said to him : If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him ; and we will come to him and will make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words (v. 23).*

A. By this answer He corrects the mistake of His Apostle, and He explains that He has no intention of only manifesting Himself to His Apostles and excluding all other men ; since, not only will He manifest Himself to every man who loves Him, but His Eternal Father will come with Him, and both will abide in that happy man's soul.

B. It may be well here once again to observe, how in

these words, conjointly with others that occur in this discourse, our Blessed Saviour brings clearly before His Apostles the doctrine of the Trinity, mentioning distinctly the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

C. *We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*

This blessed state begins at Baptism, when that wicked spirit whom St. Paul calls *the God of this world* (2 Cor. iv.), is compelled to withdraw from the soul of the Christian child now made a consecrated temple, in which the Eternal Trinity fix their abode. But the unclean spirit, thus gone out of a man, walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none, for Satan's only rest is to dishonour God by ruining man, His child. Therefore, before long he returns to watch the baptised child, and as soon as reason dawns, begins again the work of the Garden of Eden. By gross lies he tries to dupe the soul till now so blessed in its guileless innocence, and to induce the baptised child, by its first mortal sin, to expel the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost from Their consecrated temple. If he succeeds, he returns triumphant, to reign there again, and this last state is made worse than the first that existed before Baptism.

D. *We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*

"Attendite." This is a fitting place to halt, in order to remember with sorrow those hours in years past in which we have driven out from our souls God, our Father, our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost our Comforter, and have deliberately welcomed back Satan to reign over us.

Mother of God, pray for us sinners, and say to our souls : *Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God (Jerem. ii.).*

E. *He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words.*

If we love any one much, we not only wish to keep all his commandments, but we watch every sign of his will. If love grows cold, we become less keen to do his will.

If there is no love for God in our hearts, we break the commandments without difficulty, and we drink in iniquity like water (Job xv.). We say: *I have sinned, and what evil hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). Our study and great effort must be to obtain an increase of love. There is no presumption in this desire, for we are all commanded to love our God with our whole heart. Neither should the remembrance of our past sins hinder us from trying to increase our love; for love is the only good reparation for sins committed. Satan labours incessantly to hinder souls from loving Christ Jesus, on the pretence that they ought to be occupied only with their sins. But we must always keep in mind that our Lord Himself has sanctioned the rule that he who has sinned much and been forgiven, ought to love much, and even more than others.

By fixing our minds exclusively on our sins, we may hinder love. It is by looking at our Saviour, watching Him and listening to Him, that we gain an increase of love.

#### STATION XXII.

*And the word which you have heard is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me (v. 24).*

How often our Blessed Saviour repeats this salutary lesson, in order to impress on all His disciples, and, most of all, on those who share the Apostolic work of teaching and preaching, that their words and their doctrine must not be their own conceptions, their own private opinions, still less an outburst of their own bad passions, but the true Gospel of the Lord. *If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth* (1 St. Peter iv.). It is indeed an evil and a bitter thing when Christ's Apostles, instead of preaching from the altar the good tidings of our Lord's Gospel, pour out their own rash judgments or private resentments, thus changing the house of God into a den of thieves, if not into something worse.

#### STATION XXIII.

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid (v. 27).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour is, as has been said, disposing the souls of His Apostles more and more for the Blessed Sacrament; raising them out of dependency, and increasing their faith, hope, and love. "I am going, but I leave *My peace* with you; not a false peace, such as the world gives, but true and real peace."

#### *My peace.*

Peace was our Lord's first promise to men on the night of His Birth. *Peace to men of good-will*; and now that His last hour is at hand, He repeats His promise: *My peace I give unto you.*

#### *B. Not as the world giveth.*

We can understand better the difference between our Lord's true peace, and the apparent peace which the world offers, if we use a comparison drawn from health. Sometimes when the doctor cannot cure, he orders his patient to keep within doors, to lie in bed, perhaps to have the room darkened, to avoid the least breath of cold air, and all effort and exercise; or perhaps to travel to a warmer climate. Moreover, there is to be no worry, no anxiety. Thus, then, so long as the diseased man can be protected from the air of heaven and the light, from fatigue and from worry, from cold and from heat, from east winds and north winds and every other vagary of capricious climate, his life may be prolonged. But this is no cure. If the patient were cured, he might have the air and the wind, and the heat and the light, and endure toil as other men do.

So is it, too, with regard to peace. The peace which the world offers is that which the Holy Ghost speaks of (Ecclus. xli.), that peace which a man has *in his possessions*. So long as the man of the world has good health, much money, good weather, and servants that obey, children

that are docile, neighbours who do not contradict him, no imaginary wrong haunting him, and no fear for the future tormenting him, he enjoys a kind of peace; but a peace of the most fragile nature, and entirely insecure. The moth can consume it, the thief can at any moment steal it. Though Aman is a marvel of prosperity, yet Mardochai can destroy all Aman's peace by refusing to salute him.

Our Lord gives a peace which the moth cannot spoil, nor the thief steal away from us. He effects by His grace a thorough and complete cure, and deadens within us all the disturbing passions. His peace, like a hardy evergreen, stands through all the blasts of winter. St. Paul was sure that *neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor might nor height nor depth*, could ever take this heavenly peace from him. Even death, which has such an irresistible power to strip and consume, cannot deprive a Christian of the peace of Christ. The first martyr's face was bright as an angel's with joy, when they were dragging him to death.

C. *Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.*

We may assume that these words of our Lord sink into the souls of His Apostles, and for the time produce a great calm, so as to prepare them for their Holy Communion.

#### STATION XXIV.

*You have heard that I said to you, I go away and I come to you. If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I (v. 28).*

*If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad.*

And now He adds another word that will help them to set aside the selfish thought of their own bereavement, and to elicit a strong act of love by rejoicing in the good coming to Him, their Master. At the same time, He sets once more before them this true doctrine respecting His Human Nature that as Man He is lower than His Father.

#### STATION XXV.

*And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe (v. 29).*

"*Attendite.*" Let us stay again a little while to contemplate our Lord, and while we listen, observe how every word proceeds from charity. We speak sometimes of our ailments, or of our coming death, to get sympathy or to gratify selflove. Our Blessed Lord always has in view His Father's glory and the good of His hearers' souls. He is foretelling His Death, in order that their faith, scandalised by His Passion, may afterwards be repaired, when they remember what He had prophesied.

"Grant us grace, O Lord, to act and speak in union with the intentions of Thy Divine Heart, that so we may follow St. Paul's teaching: *All whatsoever you do in word or work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Coloss. iii.).

#### STATION XXVI.

*I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything (v. 30).*

A. Once again our Blessed Saviour reminds His Apostles that the end is very near, that they will not hear His voice much longer. These tidings, we may be sure, rouse their attention more and more to every word, and also increase very much their affection for Him, so that they are becoming better and better prepared for the Holy Mysteries.

B. *The prince of this world cometh.*

Man, under God, was by right the prince of this world. *The Heaven of heaven is the Lord's, but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). When in the beginning He created the beautiful Paradise, He put man there to *dress it and to keep it*. So that man was to manage for God, and to keep this world. And glad indeed and well content our Father in Heaven would be to see man, as His

image, His child, His faithful steward and His delegate, continuing in charge over this world.

But man by a deliberate act of his free-will made himself over, with all his rights, to Satan, and became Satan's slave. Thus did the wicked angel become the prince of this world, which God wished to be man's paradise of pleasure.

If our Blessed Lord groaned in spirit beside the grave of Lazarus, at the thought of all the ruin Satan had caused, what does His Sacred Heart feel now when He is obliged to call him the prince of this world? With desire He is desiring the hour, which is fast approaching, when by His Death He will blot out the handwriting of the bond and the decree that is *against us and contrary to us* (Coloss. ii.).

"O most holy and most loving Lord, may Thy Kingdom come back to Thee. May Thy most holy, most just, and most wise Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

*C. And in Me he hath not anything.*

"Over Me he hath no power. Adam freely gave himself up to Lucifer. Adam's children have ratified their father's choice. Over them Lucifer has power, but I am not one of his slaves." For, as St. Paul expresses it, *He emptied Himself, or annihilated Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man* (Philipp. ii.), and, in order that He might have compassion on our infirmities, becomes *one tempted in all things like as we are*; but with one essential exception, *without sin*.

*Without sin.* All the rest of the sinner's inheritance and position He has claimed for Himself, but *without sin*, absolutely and entirely *without sin*. And because the fallen angel now usurps power over Him as if He were a sinner, and puts forth all his might and malice against Him as if He were one of his sinful slaves, he thereby forfeits all the power he had acquired over men.<sup>1</sup> Our Saviour joins in that hand-to-hand death-struggle with Lucifer which

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas, p. 3. 4. 49. a. ii. con.

Heaven gazed upon in amazement—"Duello confixere mirando"—and snatches His fallen family out of the cruel grasp of the prince of darkness. I broke the jaws of the wicked (one), and out of his teeth I took away the prey (Job xxxix.).

*All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to Thee? Who deliverest the poor from the hand of them that are stronger than he: the needy and the poor from them that strip him* (Psalm xxxiv.).

#### STATION XXVII.

*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (v. 31).

These are the words on which Father Coleridge grounds his opinion that at this point Jesus broke off His discourse and went to the Sanctuary prepared and ready for Him, there to celebrate the first Holy Mass. As has been already said, it is quite clear that He did not now at once set out on His way to Gethsemani; for St. John gives three more entire chapters of His discourse and His prayer, before we come to the words at the beginning of the eighteenth chapter, *When Jesus had said these things He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden*.

Conformably, then, with what we find recorded by some contemplatives who have been permitted to see in prayer the scenes of the Sacred Passion, we may assume that our Lord did, while in the Cenaculum, go with His disciples either to some place in the large Guest-chamber which had been fitted up as a Sanctuary, or to some other part of the building in which there was an oratory suitable for the Sacred Mysteries. This being so, we may further with Father Coleridge believe that it was at this precise point in His discourse that He arose from the super-table and went to the Sanctuary to institute and offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

#### A. Arise, let us go hence.

Before the procession moves to the Sanctuary, we may stay for a moment to consider how well our Saviour has prepared His Apostles for the Holy Sacrifice, for the reception of the Blessed Eucharist, and for the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Earlier in the evening He had said to them: *You are clean, but not all.* Now He can withdraw the

exception, *but not all*: for the traitor is gone to be the apostle of another master and the guide of the enemies of Jesus.

Therefore now they are all clean.

Besides this, we remember how some days later the disciples at Emmaus said: *Was not our heart burning within us while He spoke in the way?* (St. Luke xxiv.). Well, our Lord has this evening been speaking many words to His Apostles, and speaking with special tenderness and love. They are farewell words; and with each word there went from His Heart into theirs some of that fire which He is come to cast on this cold earth. So that we may surely take for granted that their hearts are now full of lively sentiments of faith and hope, and well warmed with Divine charity.

This being so, we may contemplate our Lord Jesus now saying in His Heart to His Eternal Father: *It is time to have mercy (on Sion), for the time is come* (Psalm ci.).

## SCENE V.

THE APARTMENT WHERE OUR LADY AND THE DEVOUT WOMEN HAVE EATEN THE PASCH.

*Arise, let us go hence.*

Was our Blessed Lady present at the first Holy Mass?

Some of those who hold the opinion that the Blessed Eucharist was instituted at the supper-table, and during the Supper, teach, as a consequence, that she was not present at the Institution, and are consequently obliged to say also that she did not receive the new Pasch, the adorable Sacrament, on this holy night; and therefore, not till after the Resurrection, and perhaps not till after the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Those, on the contrary, who prefer the common opinion that our Lord, after the Supper was over, offered up the Holy Sacrifice as a sacred service apart, gladly take for granted that she did assist at the first Mass and did receive sacramentally the Sacred Body of her Divine Son.

Some writers go still further, and consider it probable that Jesus under the Eucharistic veil remained sacramentally present within her during the whole of the terrible conflict which she sustained next day, and during her own peculiar Passion-time that followed, when she was *Maria Desolata*. The Gospel gives

us no help on this point. Neither do we find a tradition of the Church supporting the opinion.

As we are following the more common opinion that He as High Priest offered up the unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law with rites and ceremonies that were to be a model to His future Church, we may also in our contemplation assume that the Ever Blessed Mother was present at this first Holy Mass; and that with her, Magdalen and the devout women from Galilee, and possibly too some privileged disciples, such as Lazarus and Zachæus, and John, Mark, and others of the seventy-two disciples came to join the Apostles. We read in certain histories of the Sacred Passion that Cleophas and other disciples served at the Last Supper and brought the water for the washing of the feet. And there are writers who gather from old traditions that all the seventy-two disciples eat the Pasch in a separate chamber of the Coenaculum. If so they may have all assisted at the Holy Mass.

## STATION I.

*A. Arise, let us go hence.*

At Bethany, Martha went and called her sister, Mary, *secretly (silently), saying: The Master is come and calleth for thee.* Did our Divine Lord at this point select a fit messenger to go to His Holy Mother? (Who so fit as the disciple whom He loved and whom she loved?) And did John find her, and reverently and *secretly* deliver his message: "The Master says: My hour is come; and He calleth for thee?"

If so, we may contemplate the intensity and the depth of the consolation with which she receives the invitation. Whenever she is away from Him she bears the separation with a most humble resignation, and says: *Fiat*. But when she may be in His presence, her spirit doubtless exults anew in God her Saviour, and she speaks to herself *in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody* in her heart *to the Lord* (Ephes. v.). With great tranquillity and gentleness and prudence she arranges in order the devout women who are to accompany her, that all may be seemly and becoming around the holy altar, for *she loves the beauty of God's house* (Psalm xxv.).

B. And now we are further permitted to try in contemplation to picture to ourselves in our poor way some of her

thoughts concerning the adorable mysteries that are to be accomplished.

For we may, as has been said, take for granted that she knows all that is to come. Her Divine Son on this night is treating the fishermen of Galilee as His intimate friends, and saying to them: *All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you.* Did He not then surely in those long years of patient waiting at Nazareth comfort His overburdened Heart and her motherly heart by sharing all His secrets with her? *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* (Genesis xviii.).

Among other mysteries, then, He has no doubt fully revealed to her the design of His Eternal Father, that when His natural life on earth is ended, He shall live on here below in a new and ineffable manner in the Blessed Eucharist.

C. And her tears are flowing fast and her humble heart is throbbing and burning as He explains to her how it is, in the first place, love and reverence for her that constrains Him to enter upon this most marvellous sacramental existence. She is to give up, for love of Him, her right to die with Him. She is to survive Him, a widowed, childless, exiled mother. *Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged: my soul hath been long a sojourner!* (Psalm cxix.). For very compassion then for her, if other reasons there were none, His filial Heart is restless till He has invented this plan of abiding still with her.

*Qui pro nobis natus,  
Tulit esse tuus.*

Thus does Holy Church sing in our familiar hymn, the *Ave Maris stella*. That is to say, the Incarnation is for us all. For all men the Lord is made Flesh. But in a way most special and transcendent, the Son of God has become Man for her, and to belong to her. So is it now. The Most Holy Eucharist is for us all: for, O Lord, *Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels, and gapest them Bread*

*from Heaven prepared without labour; having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste. For Thy sustenance showed Thy sweetness to Thy children, and serving every man's will it was turned to what every man liked* (Wisdom xvi.).

Yes, for every man Jesus Christ was born; for every man He died; and with all His Heart and with all His strength He wishes all men to be saved. So, too, does He now wish all men to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, that every man may live by Him and have *everlasting life* (St. John vi.). All this is true; but as in a very special and transcendent sense He became Incarnate for her, and in a better, higher, and supereminent way by His Death redeemed her; so is the Adorable Sacrament of His love in a special and excellent way instituted for her. Through her He was given to us in Bethlehem; and through her, in another sense, He is given to us in the Most Adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist.

D. The Blessed Eucharist, as has been said, is to be the Sun in the firmament of the Church, from Whose light no one can hide himself (Psalm xviii.). What wonder therefore, if, knowing as they do that the Blessed Eucharist and every other good thing come to us through the Mother of God, holy and learned men are not afraid to apply to her the words of Ecclesiasticus: *I made that in the Heavens there should rise light that never faileth?* (c. xxiv.).

E. Tertullian, using human language, represents God, when creating the body and soul of Adam, as entirely absorbed, if we may so speak, in the work, because He knew that He was creating a likeness of His Divine Son—*forma futuri*—a figure of the second Adam, Who was to come (Romans v.). *Totum Deum occupatum et deditum; munus, sensu, opere, consilio, sapienter providentem*—"The whole Godhead occupied and devoted to the work—with hand, perception, labour, prudence—arranging every detail most wisely".

These words contain a great truth. A painter prepares

most carefully the sketch of the grand picture to come. And so God creates Adam with infinite care, because He is creating an image of Christ Jesus. The sketch or image must foreshow fitly the perfection of the excellent and transcendent work that is to come.

But if Adam was to be the figure, so are all intended by God to be copies and images of Christ Jesus—*Whom He predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren* (Romans viii.). Here is the secret of our being so precious to our God. We are images, most carefully made by the Creator Himself, of His one begotten Son. *Since thou becomest honourable in My eyes, thou art glorious : I have loved thee* (Isaiah xliii.).

It is because we are images, living images of Christ Jesus, and His brethren and therefore children of His Mother, that we are admitted to a share in all the good things created for Him and for her.

“Blessed be God. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.”

F. Here, too, we have the secret why man, redeemed and become Christ's image, is so hated and persecuted by Lucifer. God, knowing well why Lucifer hates us, treats us with infinite compassion.

## STATION II.

*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (St. John xiv. 31).

*A. That the world may know that I love the Father.*

Therefore those theologians who think that Jesus here rises to go and begin His Passion at Gethsemani, naturally understand these words to mean that our Saviour is going forth to prove that His loving obedience is strong as death and far stronger. But according to the view of Father

Coleridge, which we have adopted, that our Saviour is not as yet going to Gethsemani, but is going to the altar to enter into a new existence in the Blessed Eucharist, quite a new light dawns upon these words : *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.*

For now the sense must be that, in order to prove His boundless love to His Father, and His most complete and filial and loving obedience, He is rising up to begin this new existence under the form of wheaten bread and the juice of the grape.

The chalice which He was to drink on earth as Man, was entirely, every drop of it, prepared for Him by His Eternal Father. It is in obedience to His Father that He became Incarnate. In obedience to His Father He will live in the Blessed Eucharist, in the form of a morsel of bread and a few drops of wine. This being His Father's will, at once, with all His Heart and all His mind and all His strength, He answers : *Behold I come—that the world may know that I love the Father, and as He gave Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.*

B. Some of the holy Fathers apply to the Incarnation of the Son of God these words : *Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills* (Cant. ii.).

(a) To His first great downward leap, when from Heaven He entered into the virginal womb of His Blessed Mother, Holy Church applies the words of Wisdom : *While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from Heaen from Thy royal throne* (Wisdom xviii.). In that hour the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.

(b) A second great downward leap our Saviour took, constrained thereto by the excess of His charity, when at the ninth hour He passed from the life of this world, through the gates of death, into the darkness of the grave and the prison of the holy dead.



(c) The third, and perchance the deepest plunge of all, is when the compassionate love of our Father in Heaven asks of Him to enter into His Sacramental Life and become permanently the Food of men.

Yes: "Perchance the deepest plunge of all".

C. For when our Lord God takes the form of a little bread, He puts Himself in a position immeasurably lower than the state and position of a man, to which He came down at His Incarnation. What comparison, according to our notions, can there be between the condition of a man and the condition of the food which is taken into the body of man? When, therefore, He became our food, this is, we may say, a new annihilation. In a new and more astounding way He has *emptied Himself*, as St. Paul expresses it.

D. Then again—to continue the comparison in some detail—as an Infant in His mother's womb He was only known to her, and from her received nothing but continual veneration and love. But in the Blessed Eucharist He is in the presence of multitudes who judge Him and rate Him solely by the garb He wears. To them He is a morsel of bread, and they deride Him as a wafer God. "*Exinanivi semetipsum*."

E. In the next place, as a Child He was subject to Holy Mary and St. Joseph, but they used their authority with inexpressible tenderness and most reverential love. In the Blessed Eucharist He shall be subject to men of every class and condition, to the good and to the bad alike. *Summum bonum, summum malum*. This is the Eternal Father's will, and His immediate answer is: *Behold, I come—Arise, let us go, because I love My Father, and as He gives Me commandment, so do I*. "*Exinanivi semetipsum*."

The cost He has counted, and into His Eucharistic Life He enters, saying: *My Heart hath expected misery and reproach*.

F. True, as a Man He was afterwards subject to other masters besides His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. He

was subject to Pilate, and to Herod, and to the Rulers, and to the soldiers and the servants of Jerusalem.

But in the first place, the power of these men was limited. All the others were dependent on the will of the Roman Governor, and required his sanction before they could carry into effect their designs regarding Jesus. Then Pilate himself was kept in check by the fear of Tiberius, and what he might say and do if Roman justice were outraged.

G. Moreover, all these masters who in Jerusalem had power over our Lord, even if we include the cohort of soldiers and all the servants, are few, very few when compared with the uncounted and countless crowd of masters that shall exercise power over Him in His Eucharistic state; and a power too not kept in check by any Roman Governor or Emperor.

H. Add besides, that the rule of all these masters in Jerusalem is short-lived. After the ninth hour, even Pilate himself, the head Ruler, shall no longer be able to say: *I have power to crucify Thee, and power to let Thee go*.

But when His wondering angels ask how long His Eucharistic subjection is to last, our Lord answers by pointing to His unchangeable word: *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*.

I. Then if we compare the downward leap from life on earth into the darkness and the shadow of death, with this new plunge down into the depths, when He enters into His Sacramental existence, we must remember that when He died at the hour of the evening sacrifice, His Blessed Soul passed out of the power of men and malicious demons into the hands of His Eternal Father; and the anguish of His Blessed Body was also at an end. In the tomb, the wicked ceased to trouble Him, and His weary body was at rest.

But when He begins His existence on the altar, He comes out, if we may so speak, from the shelter and

protection of the Most High which He enjoys in His Home in Heaven, to put Himself again into the hands of men, and into the power of those princes of darkness, whom men choose to have as their masters.

And this time it is not for one day that He is going to subject Himself to men. It is decreed and fixed that now His exile on earth is to be till the consummation of the world.

J. Neither will He now any more avail Himself of that power which He so often used in Judea, in order to escape from His enemies; in the Eucharistic life He will not hide Himself, He will not suddenly escape out of the hands of priests and people, and go elsewhere.

Why is this? Neither change, we are told, nor the shadow of change, can come over the unchangeable Son of God, Who is *Jesus yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever*. And yet, certainly, His disciple who knew Him well tells us that in Judea *He did not trust Himself unto men, for that He knew all men. And because He needeth not that any should give testimony of man, for He knew what was in man* (St. John ii.). How is it then? Are men so entirely altered and amended and trustworthy now that He can give Himself up so completely to our keeping? If so, how comes it that the Holy Spirit dictated that sentence, *What is that that hath been? The same that shall be*. Is not this the true meaning of these words, that the men living now are the true, genuine, unmistakable children of the men that then were, with all their passions; and surrounded by the same malicious spirits, ever seeking whom they may tempt and whom they may devour?

Was there any type of man existing in Jerusalem, in the Prætorium, or the Palace, or the Presbytery, or the streets, that has since died out? If the Heart of Jesus then expected *reproach and misery*, what is to come now when He puts Himself so completely into the power of men, the bad as well as the good? *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali.*

K. *That the world may know that I love the Father. Arise, let us go.*

For what more can He do to prove His loving obedience? Into what deeper depths can His love cast Him down? For in good truth, what else is our Lord's Eucharistic life to be but the Sacred Passion prolonged and perpetuated in a new and miraculous and stupendous way, invented by the charity of His Sacred Heart? In the revelation vouchsafed to St. Paul concerning the Blessed Eucharist, it is said: *As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come*. In more ways than one the Blessed Eucharist is to show and represent the Death of the Lord, and not only His Death, but that ocean of disgrace and ignominy and degradation which overwhelmed Him during His Sacred Passion, before His Death. It is to be a memorial of all His wonderful works, and above all, a memorial and living representation of the ingratitude and injustice and opprobrium which in silence He endured during His Passion. *He shall be dumb as a lamb before the shearer: and He shall not open His mouth* (Isaiah liii.).

L. *He shall not open His mouth.*

For a silence like the stillness of the grave shall reign for ever unbroken in the Tabernacle. A silence such as shall persuade multitudes of men to say, 'There is no one there. No one sees me; no one hears me. For the Lamb of God shall live there day and night — through honour and dishonour, good report and evil report — *He shall not open His mouth*. "*Jesus autem tacebat.*"

As an infant He could be seen, and His very littleness and His tears could attract some compassion, and He could also make His cries heard to win some pity and get some help.

Later, again, when a Man of Sorrows, His pale face could draw the eyes of men, and His wounds could speak to their hearts. But in His Eucharistic state He is incom-

parably more helpless. He is little and insignificant, as one annihilated and emptied out.

M.

Visus, gustus, tactus, in te fallitur.  
In cruce larebat sola Deitas.  
At hic laret simul et humanitas.

"The sight, the taste, the touch, give us no help at all to know how near He is. On Calvary His Divinity, only His Divinity, was hidden; but here there is no sign of any kind to tell us that His human Soul and Body are with us."

*Erst subditus, He was subject*, was the history of His life at Nazareth. *Jesus tacebat* was true of certain short hours of the night and the day of His Sacred Passion. But now those words, *Erst subditus—Jesus tacebat*: are to be the short story of His long existence through the ages in the Most Holy Eucharist. The hidden God He is to be. And, alas! too often we might borrow the words which St. Paul found inscribed at Athens, and say that in many places Jesus still be in the tabernacle the *unknown God*.

N. *That the world may know that I love the Father.*

*Arise, let us go.*

We were endeavouring just now to imagine what manner of thoughts arose in the heart of His Blessed Mother when her Son in days gone by explained to her, as He stood by her side in all the loveliness of His youth, the compassionate decree of the Eternal Father that He was to become in the Blessed Eucharist the food of fallen man. Let us return for a little while longer to this study.

If, by an impossible supposition, Jesus had a mother who loved Him as Mary loved, but was not wise and holy and one in will with her Divine Son, as Mary was, how would the heart of such a mother beat and throb and break with sobbing when it dawned upon her what a future in His Sacramental Life was prepared by the Eternal Father for her Son!

We have dwelt upon that most appalling thought of

some holy Fathers that the Ever-Blessed Mother would, with unflinching love and obedience, with her own hand have immolated the Divine Victim had such been God's desire. But if by so doing the Mother could avert the long-enduring misery and reproach and dishonour which her Divine Son sees before Him in His Eucharistic Life, then surely to strike the death-blow would have become to a maternal heart immeasurably more possible.

"O my Son," the broken-hearted Mother would say, as the picture of this life of humiliation is set before her, "*Why hast Thou done so to us?*" (St. Luke ii.).

"O Eternal Father, all else that is in this bitter chalice, let Him drink it, but do not say that He is to live for ever as the food of men, and in the power of men, to be loathed with nausea by them, and to be scoffed at for ever by the powers of darkness."

For when we read in the Book of Job how Satan in the pride of his victories intruded among the sons of God, to scoff at Him because men whom He created did not serve Him or love Him; may we not take it for granted that the wicked spirits, as they range through this world, often halt to scoff at our Saviour in His tabernacle? "You boasted that you would draw all men to yourself; have you done it? Neither your promises nor your threats can induce them to come to you." Surely any mother who loved Christ Jesus tenderly, but was not full of grace, as Mary is, would plead most piteously, *Abisi!* Far be from Thee, my Son, all this opprobrium. *This shall not be unto Thee* (St. Matt. xvi.).

O. But these are not the thoughts of the Blessed among women when the message comes to her from her Son: "My hour is come". For though she knows that sorrows *great as the sea* are close at hand, yet at these tidings her soul superabounds with joy, seeing that all the glories of this Eucharistic Mystery have been disclosed to her.

Some holy writer has suggested that at the marriage-feast of Cana, when her Divine Son said to her, *My hour is not yet come*, He was answering a secret wish and longing, a hope against

hope in her soul, that by some possibility the great first miracle of His Public Life, which she felt in her heart He was about to work for her, might be the miracle of miracles, the Eucharistic transubstantiation. For that crowning and culminating grace His hour was not come; but at once, to console her patient love, He gladly put forth the might of His arm to work a wonder that should prepare the way for the Blessed Eucharist. For it convinced men that all power was given to Him, and that, as in the beginning God could by a word create out of nothing, so too could He also now by a word change water into wine, and wine into His Sacred Blood.

Be this, however, as it may, we can rest assured that if the Blessed Mother rises and gathers round her the devout women to go with her to assist at the first Holy Mass, she understands fully what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the charity of her Son Jesus, about to be hidden under the semblance of the unleavened bread and the juice of the grape. Her Divine Son has fully disclosed to her the plan and intention of His Eternal Father, and as she now hastens to Him, no word can come from her heart but a most reverential and jubilant *Fiat, Fili mi*. Be it done, my Son and my God, according to Thy word. *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, Who alone doth wonderful things. And blessed be the name of His Majesty for ever; and the whole earth shall be filled with His Majesty. So be it. So be it. Amen. Amen.* (Psalm lxxi.).

*P. Arise, let us go hence.*

O yes, because the time is come, and her Divine Son is going to fulfil His Father's wish, which is, in the first place, that He shall give back His Body and His Blood to her who gave of her flesh and her blood to Him, and so enable Him to become God-Man, and to earn His name of Jesus; then, too, secondly, that He shall, with His Body and His Blood, feed and nourish her who has fed and nourished Him with the substance of her body. Nothing less will content the longing of His Heart. Nothing less will accomplish the decree of His Eternal Father.

With what delight we read in the Sacred Books how

old Tobias and his son put this difficulty of their grateful hearts to one another: *My son, what can we give to this holy man that is come with thee?* and his son answered, *Father, what wages shall we give him? or what can be worthy of his benefits?* (c. xii.). *Sursum corda*. Let us lift up our hearts, and reverently dare to contemplate how the blessed choirs of angels listen in breathless ecstasy, while the Eternal Father and His Divine Son take counsel together in the wide immensity of their infinite gratitude. "My Son, what shall we give to Thy Mother, ever blessed, in return for what she has given to Thee? *Quid retribuam?*" And the Divine Son answers only by echoing back the question, "*Quid retribuam?*" My Father, what shall we give to her that shall be fitting and worthy of our boundless gratitude?"

And, to go on with our human language, the outcome of this Divine conference is the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eternal Son, Who came forth from her womb, shall, it is decreed, go back and dwell within her body. The Flesh He had from her, to her He will give back.

Moreover, carefully and faithfully and lovingly she nursed and fed Him in His helpless infancy. So now He shall become her Food, in which she shall find the *sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.), and *It shall serve her and be turned to whatever she likes*.

*Q. Arise, let us go.*

Further than this, her Divine Son has explained to her in those early days how, when He took to Himself a Human Body and Human Soul, it was not His thought to sanctify and elevate only that one Body and one Soul; the whole of His fallen family must be raised up and hallowed and made quite heavenly. Every disciple of Christ is to become a Christ, a Divine man: *of His flesh and of His bones*. The chaos of separation between her one only-begotten Son and the countless children of her second family that is to come, shall be bridged over; all are to

be in very deed her children, and the brethren of her Son :  
*of His flesh and of His bones.*

*R. Arise, let us go.*

For she has, moreover, laid up in her heart another truth taught her by her Lord, that, through the Adorable Sacrament, the sentence passed on fallen man, *Thou shalt die*, will be so far most gloriously cancelled and reversed, that the Blessed Eucharist shall become to the mortal body the germ of immortality. *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day* (St. John vi.).

*S. Arise, let us go.*

For neither has she forgotten how her Son, as He explained to her the things that were written in the Holy Books concerning Him and concerning herself, pointed out that promise of His Eternal Father : *After her shall virgins be brought to the King. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the temple of the King* (Psalm xlv.).

And she is fully conscious that it is through the Eucharistic corn of the elect, and the Eucharistic wine that *germinates virgins* (Zach. ix.), that she shall be able to lead after her into the temple of the King the long line of virgins who, even while living in the flesh, shall rival the purity of the angels. It is the Body of Christ that will sanctify their virginal bodies.

*Corpus Christi, salva me.*

*T. Arise, let us go.*

Yes! for as His Sacred Body shall sanctify, so too she knows that His Precious Blood in the sacred chalice shall inebriate. That is to say, it shall so cheer and gladden interiorly, and fill with heavenly transports the souls of His disciples, that men and women, and boys and maidens, will go to martyrdom as to a joyous wedding-day.

*Sanguis Christi, inebria me.*

U. And more than this, she knows too in her heart how the wheaten bread and the drops of the grape juice shall

be in the Church a picture of that union of hearts which is to be produced by the Sacrament of Love.

Many grains in one wheaten cake, the juice of many grapes in one chalice; even so shall many hearts be brought together and made one by feeding on the same Divine Food. They shall drink together in heavenly charity from the fountains of their Saviour, and from His Heart learn to love even as He loved. "In Thy clemency, O Lord, grant, we beseech Thee, to Thy Church the graces of unity and peace, which in the offered gifts are mystically signified; through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

*V. Arise, let us go.*

For add to all, that this holy work of the first Good Friday is too sacred, far too necessary, and too full of heavenly loveliness, to be allowed to pass away with the day. From henceforth, such is the will of the Eternal Father, every day is to be a Good Friday, and every hour of the day and the night is to be tinged and coloured by the sacred darkness on Calvary; and the men and women of all nations under heaven shall crowd round the altar, and be witnesses of the Death of the Lord, and the offering of the lean oblation, the unbloody and everlasting Sacrifice of the New Covenant.

The Holy Mass, she knows, is to be the Death of the Lord perpetuated, but with all the hideousness of sin taken out of it, and so tempered and softened by God's inventive charity, that even weak men and women can now look on without being scandalised or staggered, even as the blessed angels gazed on the Sacrifice of Calvary.

*W. Arise, let us go hence.*

Beyond all this, the Blessed Mother also knows that the Most Blessed Eucharist is planned by her God to be, till time is done, *a memorial of (all) His wonderful works* (Psalm cx.).

*A memorial of His creation, for the Lord will speak,*

<sup>1</sup> Secret for the feast of Corpus Christi.

and the adorable miracle shall be effected. He shall command, and it shall be created (Psalm xxxiii.).

*A memorial*, too, like the rainbow set in the heavens, of His enduring mercy. For so long as the Body of the Lord shall be offered upon the altar, and the adoring angels are able to cry out: *Look, O God, on the face of Thy Christ* (Psalm lxxxiii.), never shall the mercies of the Lord be taken away, never again shall the waters of the flood of God's wrath destroy all flesh.

*A memorial*, too, of the ever adorable Incarnation, when *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us*. For, in the Holy Eucharist, that blessed hour shall be made perpetual; and for ever and for ever shall be renewed that glorious pledge, that *no word shall be impossible with God*. The faithful, therefore, who wish devoutly to adore the Divine Infant concealed in His Mother's womb, will kneel before the hidden God in the Tabernacle and have Nazareth present to their souls. Even so, as each festival of Holy Church shall come round, the Christmas and the Passiontide and the Easter Resurrection, the Holy Mass and the Blessed Eucharist will serve *every man's will* and be *turned to what every man likes*, and be a living memorial of Bethlehem and Calvary and the Sepulchre.

X. Lastly, every day and every night, nay during every hour of the sunlight, and every still hour of the darkness, the Lord Jesus, though living so unknown, so unthanked, so unblessed in the midst of men, shall yet be ever saying to their poor souls, always inclined to grovel and despair, *Suscipe corda*. "Go, tell My brethren—for they are all My brethren, of My Flesh and of My bones—go tell them that My God is their God; My Father is their Father, and My eternal home is their home for ever. Tell them that whenever they eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, a certain pledge of future glory is given to them.

"Not yet, not yet, can I call them away from earth to enter into their rest; but a little while, a very little while and I will come and say: *This day thou shalt be with Me*."

Holy Mary has all these things and all this hope laid up in her bosom. And therefore as, full of grace, she bends her steps towards the chosen Sanctuary, many tears are relieving her full heart that is sighing with vehement desires for the miracle of love: *Arise, O Lord, my Son, into Thy resting-place*. And what words can bring home to us the consuming intensity with which she adds the prayer that follows in the Psalm, *O may Thy priests, my Son Jesus, may Thy priests be clothed with justice, and may Thy saints rejoice?* (Psalm cxxxi.).

As she arrives at the Sanctuary and kneels most reverently in the place prepared for her, we may humbly contemplate the devout expectancy of her heart that is watching and waiting and crying out: *How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

## SCENE VI.

### FROM THE GUEST-ROOM TO THE SANCTUARY.

#### STATION I.

*That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (St. John xiv. 31).

A. In the days of old, the Son of God, much grieved because His sheep were neglected by the appointed shepherds of Israel, said by His Prophet Ezechiel: *I Myself will seek My sheep and will visit them: I will feed them. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away I will bring again: and I will bind up that which was broken; and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve. And I will feed them in judgment* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

*I will feed them in judgment*, that is, in the wisest and best way. *I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures*, and

*these pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel; there shall they rest on the green grass; and be fed in fat pastures upon the mountains of Israel (v. 14).*

Now, on Mount Sion, in the centre of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ is going to keep His promise and do all this. *Rejoicing like a giant to run His way* (Psalm xviii.), the Good Shepherd rises to lead His little flock to the fruitful and fat pastures, and the pleasant places of repose.

B. Reverently and in great tranquillity the holy ones chosen to be the first-born of the Christian priesthood are, in their processional order, moving towards the Sanctuary, round which the blessed angels are already gathered, to see the valley of tears changed into the house of God, and a Paradise at the gate of Heaven. And after them walks the High Priest of the New Testament, *beautiful above the sons of men*, His features radiant with that ineffable contentment, that peace of His own, which fills His Soul because He is going to do what His Father has commanded. He is going in gladness *as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber* to set *His tabernacle in the sun*, so that henceforth no one may be able to *hide himself from His heat* (Psalm xviii.).

St. Paul will be, in days soon to come, desiring and longing *to be dissolved* and to be with Christ. What are his longings, to the yearning of Christ Jesus in this hour to be *dissolved* and to be with men, the Food of men! *I in them, and they in Me*: to be dissolved—not by death—but to have all natural and material impediments caused by flesh and blood melted away, if we may so speak, by the fire of charity, and so spiritualised that He can become, under the guise of bread and wine, Himself the food of His little flock.

Not in the cave of Gethsemani did He say for the first time, *My Father, Thy will be done*. Since the moment of His Incarnation His Heart has found in this one desire its meat and drink—its only repose.

C. He has found at last what He could not find in Heaven; He has found littleness: perfect littleness, to its

lowest degree, into which He can enter, and where He can admirably prove His love for His Father; and He is now arising in gladness unspeakable to go into His new resting-place, there to abide till time on earth is done.

D. As the procession moves towards the chosen Sanctuary, may we contemplate the High Priest, reciting with His priests elect some one of those familiar Psalms, so suitable, because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit as memorials of His wonderful words and wonderful works and wonderful sufferings.

*As the hurt pantheeth after the fountains of water, so my soul pantheeth after Thee, my God.*

*My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?*

*My tears have been my bread, day and night; whilst it is said to me daily, Where is thy God?*

*These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God.*

*With the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one feasting.*

*Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God (Psalm xli.).*

## SCENE VII.

### THE SANCTUARY. HOLY MASS.

Arrived at the Sacred Oratory, we may assume that they find there, provided by a most cheerful giver, *the good man of the house*, all which is necessary in order that the first Eucharistic Sacrifice may be a model for Holy Church in after ages.

Some of those privileged ones who in prayer are permitted to penetrate the veils drawn by time and space, tell us that the precious chalice used by Melchisedech of old, was ready in this holy house for use at the first Mass. Venerable Bede records that in his day this sacred chalice was still preserved with devout veneration in Jerusalem.

What is more important (at least, if the letter be authentic) is that the holy Pope and Martyr, St. Fabian, preserves in one

of his letters a tradition of the early Church that on this hallowed night, our Lord, when raising His Apostles to the priesthood, and consecrating, as is thought, some of them to the episcopal office, taught His Church by His own example to use the sacred chrism. If this be so, the vessels containing the oil and the balm to be consecrated are also ready there. And if the High Priest of the New Testament and the chosen candidates for Holy Orders have need of any special Paschal robes, all have been provided by the hospitable good man, under the eye of that watchful Providence that feeds so well the birds, and clothes so richly the lilies of the field.

An additional argument which helps to prove what already seems so probable and reasonable, namely, that this first Holy Mass was considered by the Apostles to be the model that the Church was afterwards to follow, may be drawn from the fact that Pope Leo IX. states in one of his Epistles that the words in the form of consecration used in the Roman Liturgy—*Mysterium fidei*—were inserted by St. Peter, who, through his special gift of faith, was enabled to understand more fully and retain more exactly the words of our Saviour.<sup>1</sup>

### STATION I.

*I will go in to the Altar of God (Ps. xlii.).*

A. In the Sanctuary and immediately round the altar we find the High Priest Jesus and the Eleven whom He had trained so well, and is about to raise to the priesthood *according to the order of Melchisedech*. They are henceforth to go *into Thy holy hill*, O God, and *into Thy tabernacle*. They are to stand at the altar of God in place of the children of Aaron and the Levites, whose office is now to become extinct.

B. There, in a special place prepared for her, we find the Blessed Mother of God, and near her St. Magdalen and other devout women.

C. Then too, as it is recorded that in a separate chamber of the Cenacle the seventy-two disciples, who were to be the helpmates of the Apostles, had eaten the legal Paschal supper, we may also contemplate them permitted to assist at the Holy Sacrifice in the oratory.

<sup>1</sup> See Father Barradius and Ven. M. d'Agreda on the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

D. Present also, though unseen, are the choirs of the angels drawn down from Heaven by the wonderful novelty and passing holiness of this work to be done on earth. Words akin to those they heard at Bethlehem are their invitation to each other now. Let us go down and see the things that are to be done on Mount Sion. Come, let us praise the Lord with joy, let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour. Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving. Their old song was, *For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods* (Ps. xciv.). Now must they sing a new canticle, "The Lord God is little, and because He is little He will be a great King above all gods". Their ancient anthem was, *Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised*. Their new song now shall be, "Little is the Lord, and exceedingly to be loved. Let us fall down and adore before the littleness of the Lord that made us."

E. Then sternly and with authority does St. Michael, the Prince of the heavenly host, command the wicked spirits of darkness and say to them, *Avant!* so that they shall not dare to intrude at this hour into this Paradise of the new creation. The storm has raged that they stirred up; and this very night the storm shall rage again more fiercely than ever before. But for this short hour of blessed privilege there shall be a great tranquillity.

Sti jucunda, sit decora	Very sweet and most becoming
Mentis jubitatio.	Be the soul's glad psalmody.

F. Happy and most blessed company! Is this earth any longer the valley of tears? "What have we in Heaven," the blessed angels are saying, "better than Christ, the Son of God? What else is this little Christian Sanctuary with its altar but *Domus Dei et porta cæli*—the very house of God, the gateway and outer court of Heaven? For our King and the Queen of Heaven are here, and the court of Heaven must needs come out to be with them."

G. Is Peter saying once more in his secret soul, *It is good for us to be here?* He has good reason to say so.



Other disciples turned away and left Jesus, and walked no more with Him, when He told them in Capharnaum what He was going to do this night. They said : *This saying is hard* : and they left their God. Most unwisely did they make haste in the time of clouds, and give no heed to the good counsel : *Wait on God in patience : believe God and He will recover thee* (Eccclus. ii.). Alas ! where are they on this hallowed night, they who ought to be with His little flock ? *Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas*, and blessed are they who stood with thee when, as answer to the question of the Lord, *Will you also go away ?* thou didst so wisely say : *Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life !*

H. And he, the unhappy man whose place is empty here to-night, whose bishopric another is to take, he too, though perchance he spoké no words on that day at Capharnaum, yet did he entirely in his heart agree with those who then rejected the Holy Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist. For otherwise, it would be difficult to account for that scathing word our Saviour uttered, apparently out of season, *Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil ?* Judas now, under the orders of the prince of this world, is marshalling his array of soldiers and armed servants, while the High Priest Jesus with His twelve legions of peaceful angels is at the altar.

I. Let us join with St. Peter, and say, *It is good for us to be here*. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Who have dealt with us so mercifully that even the most lowly can say daily : *Introito ad altare Dei—I will go in to the altar of God and witness the wonders that are wrought there.*" *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me : we shall go into the House of the Lord* (Psalm cxxi.). The prophecy is about to be fulfilled : *I will bring them into My holy Mount, and will make them joyful in My House of Prayer : their holocausts and victims shall please Me upon My altar ; for My House shall be called the House of Prayer to all the nations* (Isaías lvi.).

## STATION II.

## THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

A. And now in contemplation, may we believe that our High Priest Jesus, mindful to teach His future Church, begins the solemn Mysteries with those sacred and familiar words : "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and signs Himself with the sign of salvation ? For it is the opinion of theologians that He did afterwards use the sign of the Cross in blessing the bread and the chalice.<sup>1</sup>

B. If after this He bows Himself down and humbles Himself before His Eternal Father, as His delegates at the holy altar shall do hereafter, never shall penitent saint have a heart bruised and contrite as His is in this hour. For He knows that He is now the Sinner, the Representative of the sinful race, that *the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*. Everything belonging to the sinner—excepting always the guilt—is now His portion. *My iniquities*, He can say, *are gone over My head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon Me. I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long* (Psalm xxxvii.).

C. Then we may ask too, does He on this hallowed night for the first time make known to His disciples the hymn of the angels which Holy Mary has had laid up in her heart since the first Christmas night : *Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good-will ?*

D. After this, if by example He is teaching Holy Church to predispose the minds of the faithful for the Holy Mysteries by some fitting instruction selected from the Old Testament, and some also from His own Gospel, we may ask what words He selects to be read from the ancient prophecies ? Does He wish His disciples to be reminded by Malachy that the old priesthood of Aaron and the old sacrifices are now to pass away ? *To you, O priests, that*

<sup>1</sup> See Father Cornelius à Lapide, *In Evangel. St. Matth.* c. xxvi. 26.

despise My name, and have said : *Wherein have we despised Thy name ? You offer polluted bread upon My altar, and you say : Wherein have we polluted Thee ? In that you say : The table of the Lord is contemptible. If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil ? Offer it to thy prince if he will be pleased with it, or if he will regard thy face, saith the Lord of hosts. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts ; and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles : and in every place there is sacrifice : and there is offered to My name a clean oblation : for My name is great among the Gentiles (Malach. i.).*

Or does He rather choose that they should hear some one of the revelations made to His Prophets concerning His Sacred Passion ? For if so, His Apostles will recall in after times what they hear to-night, and thereby understand that remembrance of His sufferings and Death will always be a most suitable preparation for receiving the Blessed Eucharist.

Possibly, too, He foresees how much their shaken faith will be repaired and strengthened, if at this hour to-morrow they shall call to mind that they had heard the terrible events of the day detailed in prophetic words such as those of Isaia. *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness : and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of Him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows ; and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed (C. liii.).*

Or, again, He may perchance think it well that they should hear those prophetic words of the Archangel Gabriel to Daniel which are now to have their fulfilment :

Know thou therefore and take notice : *That from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again unto Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. And the street shall be built again, and the walls in straitness of times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary : and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And He shall confirm the covenant with many in one week : and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail : and there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and the end (C. ix.).*

E. After this we may perhaps also contemplate our Saviour bringing back to their minds, with great affection and very solemnly, words from His own Gospel. Surely it would be the moment to call back some of the wonderful words He had spoken at Capharnaum a year ago. *I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that if any man eat of It he may not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever ; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.—Amen, amen, I say to you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from Heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever (St. John vi.).*

F. And then, as not many days ago, after saying to Martha, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, He put the question: "*Credis hoc?*"—*Dost thou believe this?* so now in this solemn moment He may wish His Apostles to prepare for the Sacred Mysteries by making their devout profession of faith. *My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. Credis hoc?*—Do you believe? *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day. Credis hoc?*—Do you believe? When heretofore He addressed words akin to these to the father of the possessed child we read that immediately the afflicted father of the boy, crying with tears, said: *I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief*. May we then assume that in this hour of grace, this acceptable time, when the Sacred Heart of our Lord is pouring out its tenderness in exceptional profusion, and the Blessed Mother is with her all-powerful intercession pleading for her little flock, may we assume that they too, as the High Priest puts the solemn question, *Credis hoc?* with very devout tears give their answer: Yes, Lord, I do believe; I do believe?

G. Then as we observe that Holy Church in the Introit, the Gradual, the Offertory, and Post-Communion of the Mass, introduces short sentences from the Holy Books, which throw light on the Sacred Mysteries and increase devotion to the festivals in the souls of the faithful; so, too, our *High Priest, holy, innocent, and undefiled*, may wish to put His little flock in mind of some of the many prophetic sentences of the Old Testament, which are about to have now their fulfillment. Such would be, for instance, *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a Body Thou hast fitted to Me. Holocaust for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the Book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God* (Heb. x.).

Or again: *The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and My God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

Or else: *Thou hast fed Thy people with the food of angels, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.).

H. So far in our contemplation we are helping ourselves as well as we may with pious and probable conjectures. Now we come to what is certain, that is, to the things revealed to us in the narrative of three Evangelists, in St. Paul's account of the special revelation vouchsafed to him; and also, we may add, in the Liturgy of the Holy Roman Church. For, as Father Coleridge has well observed, between the words of Consecration as they stand in the Roman Missal, and the words recorded in the Gospel there is in all probability only this difference, that those in the Liturgy are the version preserved and recorded by St. Peter, and those of the New Testament are the form as preserved and recorded by the Evangelists and by St. Paul. The version which we find in the Missal is, we may observe, fuller than the others given in the New Testament. This is only what we might expect. For as the Gospel of St. Mark contains many sentences added by St. Peter, so too the Liturgy of the Roman Church, drawn up under his guidance, might well contain words omitted by others, but which his special gift of faith preserved and thought well to record. Thus it is, as has been said, that the word *Mysterium fidei*—"the mystery of faith," found nowhere else but in the Roman Missal, was, we are told, added as a sacred tradition preserved by St. Peter.

Let us then fix our attention now on the holy and inspired record of the Consecration service bequeathed to us.

### STATION III.

#### THE OBLATION AND CONSECRATION.

We have then five different accounts of the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

a. St. Matthew and St. Mark give a very brief account, and their narratives are almost identical.

b. St. Luke and St. Paul differ a little from St. Matthew and St. Mark, and agree together, though not in all details.

c. Then we have the Liturgy used in the Roman Church, which was drawn up under the guidance of St. Peter, and, as Father Coleridge observes, on account of the Church's sanction, may be considered to be well nigh as authentic as the Gospel narratives.

1. St. Matthew writes: "*CENANTIBUS ILIIS*"—"Whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread, etc. And taking the chalice He gave thanks etc.

2. St. Mark writes: "*MANDUCANTIBUS ILIIS*"—"Whilst they were eating Jesus took bread, etc. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks He gave it to them. And they all drank. And He said to them: *This is My Blood, etc.*

3. St. Luke writes: *And taking bread He gave thanks and brake, etc. Do ye this for a commemoration of Me.*

*In like manner the chalice also, AFTER He had SUPPED, saying, etc. is this: The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, etc. This do for a commemoration of Me.*

*In like manner also the chalice, AFTER He had SUPPED, saying, etc. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me.*

*For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come.*

*In the Roman Missal we find St. Peter's narrative:*

*Who (He) the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands: and raising His eyes to heaven, to Thee His Father Almighty, giving thanks to Thee, blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this. For this is My Body.*

*In like manner AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED (after the Supper) taking also this glorious (excellent) chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and also giving thanks to Thee, He blessed and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of this. For this is the chalice of My Blood, of the new and everlasting Testament, the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.*

*In these narratives we notice, as has already been observed, an apparent discrepancy.*

*For St. Matthew and St. Mark write: during the Supper, while they were eating.*

*But St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Roman Liturgy have the word, after they had supped—after He had supped.*

*How these statements, which appear to be contradictory, can be reconciled, has been explained in the beginning of the chapter.*

Here then we must first notice what are the different ceremonies specified:

1. He took bread into His holy hands.
2. He raised His eyes to heaven.
3. He gave thanks.
4. He blessed.
5. He broke.
6. He gave to His disciples.
7. He said the sacred words.

*In like manner:*

1. He took the chalice into His holy hands,
2. And gave thanks.
3. He blessed.

4. He gave to His disciples.

5. He said the holy words.

A question at once presents itself.

Are we bound to understand that these ceremonies took place in the order in which they seem to be enumerated in the Liturgy?

For instance, must we believe that our Lord first broke the bread and afterwards pronounced the words of consecration?

Again, are we obliged to believe that our Saviour first distributed the morsels of bread to His Apostles and afterwards consecrated them? Theologians do not seem to recognise any obligation of adhering so rigidly to the letter.

All are no doubt agreed that the transubstantiation did not take place until our Lord had pronounced the words of consecration: *This is My Body.*

But whether these words were pronounced after the bread was broken, or before, is a question disputed. One of the contemplatives sometimes cited by Father Coleridge, the Abbess d'Agreda, states that in one of her visions she saw our Saviour first break the bread into portions and then consecrate it. Some theologians, on the contrary, think it more probable that He first consecrated the unleavened cake and afterwards divided the Sacramental Species.

St. Thomas of Aquin seems to take it for granted that He pronounced the sacred words slowly while blessing and breaking and distributing.

Our present notions incline us to think that if the bread were broken before consecration, and crumbs and particles cleared away, there would be less danger of consecrated particles being afterwards exposed to desecration.

Some few theologians have imagined that when our Saviour made the sign of the Cross, and *blessed (benedixit)*, He in that moment effected the Consecration; but, as has just been said, there can be no doubt that transubstantiation was not effected till our Lord pronounced the sacramental form: *This is My Body.*

This then is clear, that we cannot insist rigidly on the words as they stand, and maintain that our Blessed Lord went through the sacred rite in the order which seems at first to be suggested by the words.

This is made very manifest by what we read in St. Mark's version of the consecration of the sacred chalice. *And having taken the chalice, giving thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them: This is My Blood, of the New Testament.*

According to the strict letter of this text the Apostles all drank of the chalice before our Lord pronounced the words of Consecration. This is utterly inadmissible.

## STATION IV.

*On the day before He suffered, He took bread into His sacred and venerable hands.*

We must observe that the priest who now consecrates according to the Roman Liturgy, begins by *receiving* what our Lord did and said—*He took bread into His sacred hands—lifting His eyes to heaven, and giving thanks—He blessed.*

Nor are we bound to suppose that our Blessed Saviour completed all these ceremonies in the few moments which the priest now occupies in narrating what He did. St. Peter in his version records what is omitted in all the other narratives, that Jesus stood, *lifting up His eyes to heaven to Thee, the Father Almighty.* Are we obliged to believe that this was only a momentary act?

A. As we are assuming, on good grounds, that our Lord is giving His Apostles the pattern and model according to which they are afterwards to do, we may contemplate Him holding the bread for some time in His sacred hands, and praying with His eyes uplifted, as the priest, directed by the sacred rubrics, does now at the Offertory of the Mass.

Again, the priest, who is the delegate of Christ Jesus, now prays as He offers the bread and wine to God before Consecration: "In the spirit of humility and with a contrite soul may we be received by Thee, O God; and so may our sacrifice be accomplished this day in Thy sight, that it may please Thee, Lord our God". These words are taken from the Old Testament, and are an extract from that prayer which Azarias made to God when standing with his two companions in the fiery furnace of Babylon: *For we, O Lord, are diminished more than any other nation; and are brought low this day for our sins. Nor is there at this time prince, or leader, or prophet, or holocaust, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place of first-fruits before Thee that we may find mercy. Nevertheless, in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted; so let our sacrifice be made in Thy sight this day that it may please Thee* (Daniel iii.).

B. Words, then, such as these we may contemplate on Lord devoutly pronouncing while He stands holding the bread in His holy hands, and with His eyes uplifted to His Eternal Father: *In a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted: so let our sacrifice be made in Thy sight this day that it may please Thee.*

Then, too, we may bear in mind how in that one comprehensive prayer which our Saviour composed for us, the *Pater noster*, though the faithful throughout Christendom use the common reading of the words, and say, "Give us this day our daily bread," yet in the translation made by St. Jerome—the Church's chief interpreter of Holy Writ—which is adopted in the Vulgate, he, who was so profound and thorough a scholar in Biblical languages, renders the prayer in these words: *Give us this day our supersubstantial bread.*

Many commentators, indeed, bring reasons to show that this rendering coincides with the ordinary one, but others gather from the words *supersubstantial bread*, that our Lord wished our thoughts and desires to be turned not only to the bread that sustains the body, but also to the Bread of Life, the Bread of Angels. *I am the Bread from Heaven.*

C. This being so, may we not in contemplation picture to ourselves our Blessed Lord—with the bread in His sacred hands, and His eyes uplifted, and the heart of His Blessed Mother united to His own—saying aloud in the name of His fallen race this sacred family prayer, and the petition which on this hallowed night brings home so new and so sublime a meaning: *Our Father, Give us this day our supersubstantial Bread; give us the life-giving Body of Thy own Divine Son Jesus?*

D. So, too, we may assume that, in order to give His disciples a model for their future practice,<sup>1</sup> while standing with His eyes upraised, and holding in His sacred hands the bread and the sacred chalice, He prays most fervently for all those for whom He is about to die, the living and the dead; first for His little flock present, but, as He said a little later, *not for them only, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me.*

And then, as His disciples, no doubt, believe that it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, we may contemplate Him not forgetting the holy dead; and

<sup>1</sup> Father Barradius proves that Christ offered sacrifice, by thus reasoning. His mandate to His Apostles was this: "Hoc facite quod ego. At Apostoli oblationem, et illorum successorum offerunt. Ergo et Christus obtulit: et ab illo didicerunt." (*Comment. in Evangel. lib. iii. c. xiv.*). He takes for granted that from what the Church does now we may infer what Christ did then. Father à Lapide in like manner assumes that our Lord used the sign of the Cross in blessing the bread and the chalice, in order to furnish a model for His Church.

thus teaching His Apostles that the *clean oblation* is to be for ever offered as the Sacrifice of the New Law, both for the living and the dead.

But while, following the example of the saints, we try with the help of God's grace to fill up for ourselves some of the details not given in the Holy Gospel, we take care to remember always the word our Lord spoke a little later, *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth.* How much, therefore, He taught His Apostles on this holy night concerning the Holy Mass, and how much He left to the Holy Spirit to complete and perfect, we can only reverently conjecture; as the Gospels tell us but little respecting the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist. It has been already said that there were good reasons why the Evangelists and the Apostles were, at the beginning, reserved in their teaching regarding the Adorable Mysteries.

#### E. *Taking bread He gave thanks.*

One thing, however, we may look upon as something more than a conjecture, that when, as we read, holding the bread in His venerable hands and with His eyes uplifted, our Saviour gives thanks to His Eternal Father, this thanksgiving is not merely a passing word. So much we may assume as a certainty. What form of thanksgiving our Lord used we are not told. But as grave theologians take for granted that He is giving His future Church the pattern to be followed—*Fac secundum exemplar*—it is possible that the glorious hymn of praise which we call the Preface of the Mass, may be either in part a reproduction of what St. Peter hears this night, or a hymn of praise modelled on what our Lord utters as He stands at the altar. We may try, then, devoutly to listen to the tones of His voice, so reverential, so full of love and devotion, as He slowly and solemnly repeats words such as the Seraphim say one to another, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.*

#### F. *This is My Body.*

"*O vos omnes, attendite.*" Oh, give heed now, and watch with your eyes, and with your ears listen; for the time that the blessed choirs of angels have been spending

in expecting ecstasy is past—the time that has reproduced in Holy Mary's heart the transport of that hour when she was awaiting the Birth of her Divine Son—it is gone by. The moment chosen by His Eternal Father is arrived; and Jesus holding the bread in His sacred and venerable hands, pronounces that word—more wonderful than the word which created all things in the beginning—*This is My Body.*

#### G. *This is My Body.*

And at once, foremost of all in Heaven and on earth, the Ever-Blessed Mother—for whose sake pre-eminently this wonderful word is spoken by the Lord—"Nothing hesitating in her heart," but "with her whole heart believing"—says, as with perfect faith she adores: "I believe, my God: I believe, my Lord; my Son Jesus, I believe". And in a new way, and beyond what has been heretofore, her spirit exults in God her Saviour.

#### H. *This is My Body.*

And with their Queen, the blessed angels in their noiseless ecstasy call on each other: *Come let us adore and fall down: for He is the Lord our God. Blessed, O Queen of Heaven, they add, Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* And no mind at all have they to say proudly, "We will not serve the Hidden God in His littleness".

#### I. *This is My Body.*

"Creative words,"<sup>1</sup> theologians call them, which, had the Sacred Body not been in existence, would have brought it into being. "*Suscipe Corda! Attendite.*" With our hearts turned to the Holy Sanctuary let us consider them diligently.

In this moment, under the unchanged appearances of a little wheaten bread, the Lord Jesus is present on the altar. In His own hands He holds Himself, His Body, His Blood, His Soul, His Divinity.

#### J. *This is My Body.*

In union with the Blessed among women, and the holy

<sup>1</sup> "Si Corpus Christi non esset in rebus natura, ad prolationem verborum formalium Corpus Christi de novo produceretur" (Vasquez, in 4, disp. 11, ad 3).

angels, we too may humbly prostrate ourselves to say as fittingly as we can,

Adoro Te devote, latens Deitas!

Devoutly, devoutly I adore Thee,  
O Hidden God!

*I believe, Lord, help Thou my unbelief.*

Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius:

What God has said believe I with  
all certainty:

Nihil hoc verbo veritatis verius.

No truth more true than Truth's  
own word can be.

*K. In like manner, taking also the glorious chalice.*

Foreknowing, however, that on the morrow His Sacred Blood will be drained out of His Body, and wishing the Holy Mass to show forth till the consummation of the world this separation of His Blood from His Body in Death, again He puts forth the Divine power of His arm, again He proves now that He has for our sake become Man, *no word shall be impossible with God.*

Therefore, *in like manner*—in that same hour when the old Paschal supper was brought to an end for ever—*taking also the glorious chalice into His sacred and venerable hands—and once more giving thanks to Thee, O Father—He blessed—and gave to His disciples—saying, Take and drink ye all of this—For this is the chalice of My Blood—of the new and everlasting covenant—the mystery of faith—which for you and for many shall be shed unto the remission of sins.*

*He said, and they were made. He commanded, and they were created (Psalm cxlviii.).*

*L. This is My Body which shall be delivered for you (St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi.). The same Body, the very same, that is to be covered with wounds, crucified, dead and buried.*

Ave verum Corpus natum

Ex Maria Virgine!

Vere passum, immolatum,

In cruce pro homine!

Cujus latus perforatum

Unda fluxit et Sanguine.

Sacred Body, truly born

From the Virgin Mary's womb,

Sacred Victim, bruised and torn,

Dead and buried in the tomb—

Body of the Crucified,

While still hanging on the rood,

Forth came from Thy wounded Side

Cleansing water, saving Blood.

*M. This is My Body which is given for you (St. Luke xxi.).*

Given to you, and never to be taken away from you.

Given to you to be for ever near you on the altar.

Given to you to be your strength and consolation through life.

Given to you to be your Viaticum for the journey when death comes.

*N. This is My Body.*

My wounded Body: the remembrance of which shall scare away unholy images and chasten both soul and body.

*O. This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

And day and night they say to us: *See how He loved you!*

*P. This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

This is the price paid for us by our God! It tells us what we are worth in His eyes. *What exchange shall a man give to his God for his soul that cost so dear? Indeed, you are bought at a great price (1 Cor. vi.).*

*Q. This is My Body.*

My crucified Body. Is it a small evil to render void the bitter Passion which My Body and My Soul endured for you?"

*R. This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

"My Body wounded for you! My Blood poured out for you! Oh, see and understand what sin deserves! what sin requires! *For if in the green wood these things be done, what shall be done in the dry?*"

*S. This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

"If I then have done and suffered so much for you, will you do nothing for Me? Nothing for yourself?"

*Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin (Hebrews xii.).*

*T. This is My Blood which shall be shed for you and for many. For many, that is, for all. For Christ died for all (2 Cor. v.).*

Oh, let us never forget that all our neighbours are children of our Father as much as we are. For each one Christ Jesus gave His Body and His Blood.

*Destroy not him for whom Christ died* (Romans xiv.). Do not scandalise him for whom Christ died. Hate not him for whom Christ died. Do not judge him, do not condemn him, do not wrong him for whom Christ died. "And if thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, go first to be reconciled, and then come to the altar of My Body and My Blood."

U. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

"My Body wounded; My Blood shed in presence of My Holy Mother, during our great struggle against Lucifer for your soul." For Lucifer had conquered our race; but by a man and a woman Lucifer our cruel enemy is conquered. *Thanks be to God Who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. xv.).

V. *This is My Body. This is My Blood, the mystery of faith.* We see not, but we believe. *Blessed* (thrice blessed) *they who have not seen but have believed.* Blessed be God *Who has called us from darkness into His admirable light of faith* (1 St. Peter ii.).

W. *This is the chalice of My Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant.*

In humble gratitude let us contrast this new covenant with the old one.

God said: *Moses alone shall come up to the Lord, they (Aaron and the Ancients) shall not come nigh: neither shall the people come up with him.* And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. Then Moses took half of the blood and put it into bowls: and the rest he poured upon the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it in the hearing of the people. And they said: All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do; we will be obedient.

And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people; and he said: *This is the blood of the covenant which the*

*Lord hath made with you concerning all these words* (Exodus xxiv.).

In this Covenant, observe:

1. *They shall not come nigh.* They are kept at a distance. Yet their boast was: *Neither is there any other nation that has Gods so nigh them as our God is present to all our petitions* (Deut. iv.).

*We* are not kept at a distance.

*Take and eat ye all of this. This is My Body.*

*Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened.*

2. In the Old Covenant the compact between God and His people is hallowed and sanctioned and ratified in the blood of calves.

With us our Lord makes a new covenant of love, and has it hallowed and made sacred and inviolate in the Blood of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

X. *The New and Everlasting Covenant.*

Whenever there is a covenant, there are two who bind themselves.

1. Our Blessed Lord binds Himself to be to us a Jesus—a Saviour; to atone for all our sins; to win every necessary grace for us; to forgive us not seven times, nor seventy times seven times, but as often as we repent; to be our companion through life, yoked with us, bearing with us *the burden of the day and the heat*; to be our food; to be our ransom; to be our eternal reward.

2. What do we covenant in return? To believe in Him; to hope in Him; to love Him; to be sorry for having sinned against Him; for His sake to love our brethren as ourselves.

Y. The faithful at times renew solemnly their baptismal vows. Religious men and women renew at stated times the vows of their profession.

When we approach the holy altar to receive the Sacred Body of the Lord, shall we not refresh our remembrance of the New and Everlasting Covenant of love that exists between our God and ourselves?



Z. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

Corpus Christi, salva me,  
Sanguis Christi, inebria me.  
Pasco Christi, conforta me.

## STATION V.

## HOLY COMMUNION.

A. From the sacred words of the Liturgy which we have been considering, it seems that between the Consecration and the Holy Communion there is no interval.

As soon as ever our Lord God is become by transubstantiation in a fit state to be the Food of man, He makes haste to give Himself to each of His little ones. He loses no time. *For with desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*

*Se dat suis manibus.*

B. "*Attendite.*" We may reverently therefore stay looking with our eyes at the devout demeanour of the holy Apostles as they receive their first Communion. Perchance we see tears of most humble love trickling down the weather-beaten faces of the fishermen.

C. And then the first Communion of the Ever-Blessed among women, the Mother of God.

May we devoutly speculate and ask ourselves: Did her Divine Son with His own hands give Himself to her? Or did He wait a little while till He had completed the ordination of His first priests, and with the holy chrism consecrated three of them as Bishops, and then, in order to teach His little flock the dignity and majesty of His Christian priesthood, commission His future Vicar, or her future Apostle, John the Beloved, to feed her with His Body and His Blood? *Domine, Tu nosti.*

In one way or the other, we may contemplate her receiving her Divine Son in the Adorable Sacrament, and the blessed angels gathering round their Queen, and, through St. Gabriel as their spokesman, saying to her in the old words now made quite new, now an entirely new canticle: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Thy Son Jesus is with thee, as He was in thy virginal womb."

Full of grace! Yes, and immeasurably more full than then. Blessed among women! Yes, and more blessed now, and far more full of grace than in those days gone by, happy and holy as they were.

For every day she has grown in grace. The Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus, is with her, more united with her, better known to her, more loved by her immeasurably now than then.

D. We too may, despite our unworthiness, draw near and greet her in this hour of new joy and new wonders. We too may reverently say, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Blessed is thy Hidden God." She meanwhile in her secret soul is perchance saying, with new meaning and new transports, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Jesus.*

## SCENE VIII.

## STATION I.

## HOLY ORDERS.

*Do this in remembrance of Me.*

Here the question meets us, At what time during the offering of the *clean oblation* did our Lord raise His Apostles to a participation in His priesthood, and what holy rite did He use in conferring this great Sacrament of Holy Orders upon them?

As has already been said, the letter ascribed to the holy Pope and martyr, St. Fabian, but held to be of doubtful authenticity, makes mention of a primitive tradition that our Saviour, in consecrating His Apostles, made use of holy chrism, and taught them to use it in time to come. And though this seems but scanty information, and not entirely trustworthy, yet it is in accord with the statements of those holy contemplatives who tell us in their writings that when permitted in prayer to see something of what passed in the Cenacle, they noted in many details a striking resemblance to the sacred ritual which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Bride of Christ, makes use of in the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments.<sup>1</sup>

What prayers, therefore, and what holy ceremonies our Saviour employed in ordaining His priests we know not. But the ceremonies which His Church makes use of in the administration

<sup>1</sup> See *The Dolorous Passion*, by Sister Emmerich; *The Mystic City of God*, by M. d'Agreda.

of Holy Orders are so fitting and so devotional that we are inclined to picture to ourselves our Lord, our great High Priest, the *Shepherd and Bishop of our souls* (1 St. Peter ii.), handing down to His Church the main features at least of her beautiful ritual. If, on the contrary, we think, as some holy men do, that Jesus, being Lord of all things, chose to give the great sacramental graces with very scant outward ceremony, then St. Paul says to us, *Let every man abound in his own sense*; since Holy Church teaches us no doctrine on these points.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

We may here take notice that in the Liturgy we do not find exactly these words, but others akin to them, after the consecration of the chalice: *These things, as often as you shall do them, you shall do in memory of Me*, but neither these words nor any other like them after the consecration of the bread. In St. Paul's account, however, of the revelation made to him, we read after the consecration of the bread: *This do for the commemoration of Me*; and again, after the consecration of the chalice: *This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me*.

*St. Matthew and St. Mark omit these words in both places.*

In this instance, as in so many others, we see how all the inspired writers are independent witnesses who do not blindly copy one another; and all these variations, when carefully considered under the guidance of Holy Church, help to bring the revelation of our Lord more and more into the full light.

In our present case the omission of these important words by St. Matthew and St. Mark casts no doubt whatever on their authenticity. Neither does St. Luke's testimony prove in any way that our Lord said the words only after the consecration of the bread. Nor can we conclude from the Liturgy of St. Peter that our Saviour only pronounced these words once after the consecration of the chalice. Each sacred writer sets down what the Holy Spirit wishes him to record, and our Lord has told us that *the Spirit breatheth where He wills*, and we may add also "as He wills".

St. Matthew and St. Mark set down many great truths, and also omit very many. St. Luke and St. Paul are prompted by the Holy Spirit to record other important truths, and they also omit many words and acts of our Saviour of great moment. Some of these omissions St. John many years afterwards supplies. But much more, very much more, is not committed to writing at all, but is by the Holy Spirit stored in the minds of the Apostles, and by their preaching and the teaching of Holy Church, is handed down from age to age.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

It is quite certain then that, as we find in St. Peter's Liturgy, our Saviour, after He had consecrated both the bread and the chalice, pronounced these words, or the other kindred form which we find in the Roman Liturgy: *These things as often as ye shall do, you shall do in memory of Me*. If He had only said them at this

one time, He would by this one utterance give to His new priests the power to do all that He had done.

But to St. Paul it is revealed that after the first consecration, He said the words, *This do for the commemoration of Me*; and again, after the consecration of the chalice, He said, *This do ye as often as ye shall drink for the commemoration of Me*. This account given by St. Paul may perhaps be considered the most complete. For inspired writers may omit words or events; and no Evangelist professes to tell us all that concerns our Lord. But it seems less likely that an inspired writer would add to what our Lord said. Consequently, as St. Paul states, according to all the best Catholic authorities, that it was revealed to him that our Blessed Saviour twice pronounced the Ordination form, *Do this for the commemoration of Me*, once after the consecration of the bread, and again after the consecration of the wine, we may receive this as an accurate account.

St. Paul is the only one who has preserved for us the additional words, *For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord, until He come* (1 Cor. xi.). Yet these words are most important, for they set before us briefly and clearly that the *clean oblation*, the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, is to be a substantial representation and continuation of the Sacrifice on Calvary; and it is to be the *juge sacrificium*, the everlasting Sacrifice of the New Covenant, until the end of the world.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

The question might be asked: Did our Blessed Lord pronounce these words over each of His new priests separately, or only once over them collectively? It is quite clear that He to Whom all power is committed, and Who is the Giver of all good gifts, could confer grace in either way. As Holy Church is always guided by the Holy Spirit, the practice of the Bride of Christ naturally inclines us to think that He too would repeat the sacramental form over each separately. On the other hand, the form as handed down to us by St. Paul, St. Luke, and the Liturgy, applies to all collectively.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

In the present Liturgy of the Church, as well as in St. Paul's account and St. Luke's, these words follow immediately the words by which the bread and the chalice are consecrated. This question may therefore also be asked: Must we necessarily conclude that our Lord also pronounced them immediately after giving the Blessed Sacrament to His Apostles? Or may we suppose that some interval of time elapsed during which He used other holy ceremonies, such as the application of the chrism, and then pronounced the form of ordination? From all the sacred writings before us it seems as if our Lord pronounced the words, *Do ye this in remembrance of Me*, immediately after consecrating and distributing the Blessed Eucharist. If so, it

was at this moment that He conferred the great fundamental power of the priesthood. The anointing, therefore, with chrism, and other ceremonies, may either have come before, as a preparation, or followed after the conferring of the sacerdotal office.

The two other great powers of the priesthood, the faculty of forgiving sins, and the commission to preach the Gospel, our Lord chose to confer after His Resurrection.

#### A. *Do this in remembrance of Me.*

We may then contemplate the Divine High Priest of the new and everlasting Covenant, as He stands with His eyes upraised to His Eternal Father, stretching His sacred hands over the eleven chosen ones—possibly over each of them separately—and praying meanwhile with a strong cry of His Heart, which is heard at once for His *reverence*, that the Holy Spirit, the other *Paraclete*, may come down upon them.

B. Then, too, if we adopt the old tradition, or the revelations of holy mystics, we may watch Him while with the chrism which He has already blessed, He consecrates and sanctifies their hands for the holy work they will have to do at the altar.

As we watch, we may, with St. Peter, very heartily say: *Not only my feet*, Lord Jesus, but wash and sanctify my hands and my head, that I may be wholly clean.

C. Other ceremonies He perhaps adds to inform their minds and to signify the great and principal power of the Priesthood which He is now committing to them. Perchance He delivers into their hands the patena, or dish, with the unleavened bread upon it; and the chalice, containing the juice of the grape.

D. Be this, however, as it may, of one thing we are certain, that He raises them to their heavenly dignity, and constitutes them *Priests for ever according to the order of Melchisedech* in that moment when He most feelingly and solemnly pronounces the words: *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

#### E. *"Attendite." Sursum corda!*

Let us mark how to this heavenly command given by her Son, the Ever-Blessed Mother listens in a rapture of

reverent love. For she knows that a power is at this moment given to poor frail men even greater in some respects than her own sublime privilege. For she gave birth to her Divine Child once, only once, and in one favoured spot; but the priest shall, with a creative power, give to Christ Jesus His Eucharistic Life upon the altar! —*Corpus Domini conficere*, is the word sanctioned by Holy Church—every hour, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and from the sundown throughout the still hours till the daybreak. Every hour, and in every land under the sun, the priest can pronounce the word of power: *This is My Body. This is the chalice of My Blood. "In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum"* (Psalm lviii.).

"O my Lord, and my God, O my Son," her Mother's heart cries out, "*Fiat, fiat*, may Thy most holy will be done, and may Thy priests be clothed with justice."

F. Now, too, let us contemplate the blessed choirs of Angels and Archangels, of Seraphim and Cherubim, all most humble of heart and most charitable, all so unlike their fallen companions whose malicious jealousy worked the ruin of men; all full of ineffable contentment because God has lifted up needy man from the earth, and from the dunghill raised up the poor to set them among the princes of His people. They are singing a new song to *glorify God, Who gave such power to men* (St. Matt. ix.). "It is truly meet and just and equitable and salutary," they say in gladness, "that everywhere and in all times we give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, O Father Almighty, O Eternal God, through Christ our Lord and our King. For He is Man, and the Son of Man. And His Blessed Mother, a daughter of Eve, is our Queen. And through this Man and this Woman the serpent's head shall be crushed; and fallen man is lifted high above the earth."

"*Solis presbyteris, solis presbyteris*," they now repeat

<sup>1</sup> "Est actio substantialiter productiva substantiæ Corporis et Sanguinis Christi sub speciebus, ut bene probat Suarez" (disp. i. sect. 4. 5). Van. P. Lanchius, *De Missa*, lib. ii. cap. 2.

with most humble delight. To priests, to men, to priests only, is this heavenly office committed.

G. Oh! let us make a little leisure to study devoutly and contemplate, as St. Ignatius teaches us, each word of St. Thomas's Eucharistic hymn:

Sic sacrificium istud instituit,  
Cujus officium committit voluit,  
Solis presbyteris, quibus sic congruit  
Ut sumant et dent ceteris.

"Tis thus, 'tis thus He instituted this Sacrifice—'the unbloody, the everlasting Sacrifice of the Altar'—in which the ministry is confided to priests, only to priests; whom therefore it behoves to receive themselves, and to distribute to others, the Body and the Blood of the Lord."

#### STATION II.

*This do for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come (1 Cor. xi.).*

A. "Attendite." Give thought to every word, let not (any) part of the good gift pass thee by unheeded.

The priest is to do precisely what the Lord has done. He is to say: *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

*This is My Body that shall be delivered for you: that is given to you. This is My Blood, that shall be shed for you and for many.*

And in that same hour the true Body of the Lord and His Most Precious Blood shall lie upon the altar, and Jesus Christ, God and Man, shall be there truly and really present. And the altar shall become Mount Calvary. And Jesus, the same Jesus to-day as He was then—His Heart, His compassion, His pleading for us all the same—shall once more, as Priest and as Victim, offer Himself to His Eternal Father for us poor sinners, and as earnestly and lovingly as on Calvary, He will say again: *Father, forgive them.*

B. And so men, raised and consecrated to the priesthood

according to the order of Melchisedech, shall, till the consummation of the world, show forth the Death of the Lord; represent the Death of the Lord; exhibit to the faithful the Sacred Body and the Sacred Blood, inseparable now, it is true; and yet, to the eye, as if they were separated as on Calvary, in order that men may better remember Jesus and His bitter Death.

C. Oh! if the Shepherds said: *Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see the Word that is come to pass:* have we not better reason earnestly to call to one another: "Let us make haste to the altar, for the consecrated priest is about to show and to represent truly and substantially the Death of the Lord"? Which spectacle ought to draw our hearts more strongly, His Birth or His Death? He Himself has answered the question. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself (St. John xii.).*

Oh, foolish and senseless people! God's messenger may well say to us, if the serpent deceives us and induces us not to hasten to Holy Mass, and still more, not even to go reluctantly when commanded under pain of great sin.

D. *Do this in remembrance of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord.*

"O vos omnes, attendite." Oh! let us join most fervently in the cry of our Lady, and the earnest prayer of all the blessed angels: *May Thy priests, O Lord, be clothed with justice, and may Thy saints rejoice (Psalm cxxxi.).*

May the Blessed in Heaven be all gladdened because His priests on earth are clothed with justice.

May they not be saddened and made very sorrowful because "Thy priests, O Lord, are not clothed with justice".

But can there be sadness or sorrow in Heaven? True, indeed, sadness and sorrow may not be the words to express the disappointment and dismay in the Heart of our Lord, and the hearts of all the Blessed who compassionate Him, when His chosen priests are faithless to Him. We use, for want of better, human language, as God Himself is obliged

to do when He speaks to us. God, it is written, *was touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, and He repented that He had made man*, when He witnessed the wickedness of men before the Deluge. But what was wickedness then, in that land of banishment with the curse lying upon it, compared with sin now in the Holy Sanctuary? sin at the Altar? sin beside the Tabernacle? Does the loving Heart of Jesus repent at times that He said that word to men: *Do this in memory of Me*? Does He repent that He said: *My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed*?

E. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

Yes, truly it behoves us to pray heartily and perseveringly: *May Thy priests, O Lord, be clothed with justice.* For it is written: It shall be, *like people, like priest* (Osee iv.). That is to say, there will be a necessary mutual influence; a holy priest will help many to holiness, and a holy people will by their prayers secure the inestimable blessing of having holy priests.

F. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

Our Mother the Church establishes in each season of the year Ember days of prayer and penance, in order that the faithful may have good priests, *clothed with justice.* Besides this public supplication, in which we should join most fervently, it behoves us all, every family, every household, every individual, to have our own private Ember days, in which we shall cry to God to give us the priceless blessing of good and holy priests, since the sheep so very much depend upon their shepherd.

G. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

*Pray ye*, our Saviour said to His disciples, *Pray ye to the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest* (St. Matt. ix.).

The priest is Christ's labourer. Let us then give ear to our Lord's petition, even as He hears our petitions, and let us pray earnestly with Him and His Blessed Mother that His priests may be *clothed with justice.*

(a) *Clothed with justice*, yes; in order that they may be

*just at the altar to Christ Jesus—ever discerning the Body of the Lord which they hold in their hands; and ever by their reverence and devotion teaching the people that they are showing the Death of the Lord.*

(b) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that they may be just to themselves—not taking the honour to themselves unless they be called as Aaron was; and walking cautiously lest, when they have preached to others, themselves should become *castaways.*

(c) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that in the pulpit they may be just to Christ's little flock, and sincerely *preach the word*, and be *instant in season, and out of season*; and *reprove, entreat, rebuke, in all patience and doctrine*; and *do the work of an evangelist, and fulfil (their) ministry* (2 Timothy iv.).

(d) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that in the sacred tribunal the priest may be to the faithful:

A judge who shall judge justly, who never will bind when he ought to loose, and never loose when he ought to bind; but will always pronounce a judgment that Christ can ratify in Heaven, and always be a *faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God.*

A father, who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err (Hebrews v.).

A physician trained and expert, to heal wounds skilfully and lovingly.

A doctor whose lips shall keep knowledge, and the faithful shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts (Malach. ii.).

(e) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that beside the bed of the dying the priest may most justly and carefully and diligently provide all the helps which the Lord hath left for His little ones in their great need; that he may be there to *pray over the sick man the prayer of faith*; to *anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord*; to take care that the dying in that supreme moment has ample absolution, plentiful Indulgence, and the Most Holy Viaticum, the Bread of Heaven,

to strengthen him for the great journey : and the continual prayers of the bystanders so long as Satan has still time to deceive.

(f) *Clothed with justice*, yes ; that he may be just to the holy dead, and call on the bereaved survivors not to waste precious moments in lamenting—even as others who have no hope—but to hasten with him to the altar, full of firm belief that it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins.

(g) *Clothed with justice*, yes ; that when his own time shall come, and the angel whispers in the middle of the night, Come, and give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer, he may in that last hour be able to say humbly and hopefully, *I have fought a good fight* ; and that at the judgment-seat our Lord may with gladness say to him : *Come, thou good and faithful servant, because thou wast faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things* ; and not be compelled to say to him, touched with infinite sorrow of Heart : *My flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed ; that which was broken you have not bound up, neither have you sought that which was lost* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

H. *Do this in remembrance of Me.*

The priest, then, is to be Christ's familiar ; most intimate with Him ; one who lives on Calvary ; showing the Death of the Lord.

I. *May Thy priests be clothed with justice.* For, as so much is given to them, assuredly much shall be required of them. Therefore must we all have great compassion on the priests of the Lord, for heavy is the burden they bear.

J. The priest is one among the prelates for whom St. Paul pleads : *Remember your prelates—obey your prelates, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls ; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief. For this is not expedient for you* (Hebrews xiii.).

K. *This is not expedient for you.*

No : surely it is not expedient for you that your priest, your shepherd, should be unfaithful to his charge. Therefore in your prayers plead for him that he may be clothed with justice, and prove himself a prudent and a faithful servant.

L. *Remember your prelates.*

The priest is the candle not to be put under a bushel, but set on a candlestick. He is necessarily prominent and conspicuous. If he has defects and shortcomings, they cannot be hidden ; but are we therefore to go about spreading the news of his faults and failings, as if it were good news that we had to tell ? Charity does not rejoice in iniquity. If we discern faults and sins in the priest of God, our Lord will ask us at the Judgment, "What did you do to better him, to heal his wounds ? What alms did you give by prayer and penance to one whose need was so sore ?" For the priest is one of the mighty, who if they sin shall be mightily tormented.

Indeed, it is not expedient for you, it is no gain to you if your priest, your pastor, is unfaithful. Have compassion on him.

M. The faithful by their prayers often secure to themselves the great grace of having zealous and holy priests for their pastors.

N. How many Catholic families owe the blessing that rests on their home to the alms they willingly gave to educate well-chosen children for the priesthood !

O. Of priests more than others is it true, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.* It was a saying of St. Francis of Sales that a Catholic who passed through a family lawsuit without grievous sin deserved to be canonised. A quarrel with a priest may easily prove as great a calamity as a bitter lawsuit. Oh, hard indeed is it to reverence God, if, rightly or wrongly, we lose reverence for His delegate. The Holy Spirit, therefore, joins God and God's priest together : *With all thy soul fear the Lord and reverence His priests. With all thy*

*strength love Him that made thee, and forsake not His ministers. Honour God with all thy soul, and give honour to the priests (Ecclus. vii.).*

### STATION III.

#### THE POST-COMMUNION.

*And when they had said a hymn, they went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. The first Holy Mass is now near its close. All the essential work is now consummated. The *clean oblation* has been offered, and Christ the High Priest has with His own hands given Himself to His little flock to be their food. *Se dat suis manibus.*

From the words of St. Mark, *When they had said a hymn, they went forth*, we need not, so our guides and masters teach us, conclude that Christ and His disciples said a hymn and immediately went out; it is enough if we believe that they did say a hymn of thanksgiving before they left the Cenacle. Even if St. Mark had been silent on this point, as the other Evangelists are, and had said nothing to us of this thanksgiving, we might safely have taken it as a certainty that this little flock, the chosen company which is to be with the blessed angels in Heaven, and which has been taught by our Blessed Saviour Himself, would not, after their first Communion, go away abruptly, like the Galilean lepers, without a hearty thanksgiving.

B. It is recorded that the prescribed thanksgiving service at the end of the legal Paschal supper consisted of the 113th Psalm: *In exitu Israel*, and the four following Psalms: the Psalm *Dilexi* (cxiv.), the Psalm *Credidi* (cxv.), the Psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* (cxvi.), and the Psalm *Confitemini Domino* (cxvii.). If then our Blessed Saviour thinks proper, now that the new Pasch has been celebrated in His Kingdom, to make use of these holy Psalms as the Post-Communion hymn of thanksgiving,

we may devoutly contemplate the Blessed Mother of God listening to those inspired words which now have so new and so sublime a meaning.

If, at the coming out of Israel from Egypt, *the earth was moved at the presence of the Lord, and the mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock*, how is the earth, how are the mountains, and the hills, and the valleys to express their gladness now that the Lord Jesus has entered into His rest and taken up His abode on earth till the consummation of the world? If men allow Him to have His will, there shall not be a hamlet on the mountain, nor a village in the valley, without its altar, where the Hidden God shall live in His resting-place, in the midst of His beloved little flock.

The Psalmist says exultingly that in those bygone days of the ancient Pasch *He turned the rocks into pools of water, and the stony hills into fountains of water*. What is that miracle when set beside the works done in the Cenacle to-night? Or the work that these consecrated fishermen are now empowered to do?

C. It is Pope Urban VIII. who wrote those words: "If there be aught in this nether world which the blessed in their heavenly home might envy (supposing that envy could reach them there), surely that one thing would be the Sacrifice of the Mass, thanks to which men here below enjoy by anticipation a Heaven on earth; since they have before their eyes and hold in their hands the Lord of Heaven and earth".

May we not then be permitted to think of the blessed Saints now in glory, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, St. Benedict, St. Ignatius, St. Alphonsus, as looking down with a holy and heavenly envy on their successors still here in the flesh, who are privileged to stand at the altar and offer to God the *everlasting Sacrifice, the clean oblation*?

D. Let us try to contemplate the reverence and love with which the Blessed Mother and the newly ordained priests and the faithful disciples listen to our Lord reciting

with them the thanksgiving psalms. They heard Him at Bethany thank the Eternal Father for giving Him power to raise Lazarus from death. What is the resurrection of Lazarus to the miracle of boundless love, which the Eternal Father has permitted Him to work to-night? And oh—ininitely more surprising!—He has given full permission to these poor fishermen and their successors to work the same to the end of time.

E. "*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*"—the prescribed Paschal thanksgiving continues—*All ye nations, praise the Lord, for (now) His mercy is confirmed on us.*

This is the new and everlasting covenant in His Blood. As long as we see the holy altar in our midst, and the priest according to the order of Melchisedech offering the everlasting Sacrifice, and our Hidden God reposing in His resting-place, we may be quite sure that our Father in Heaven has not forgotten His covenant of mercy and love. *His mercy is confirmed upon us.*

In the old days, indeed, even God's faithful servants thought that He had forgotten the covenant He had made with David. *Thou hast rejected and despised. Thou hast been angry with Thy anointed. Thou hast overthrown the covenant of Thy servant. Thou hast profaned his sanctuary on the earth* (Psalm lxxxviii.). They did not then understand that the promises made to David have their real fulfilment in Jesus the Son of David. To Holy Mary St. Gabriel revealed that her Son Jesus was to be, in the highest and heavenly sense, the successor of David and the true and real David. *The Lord God shall give to Him the throne of David His Father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end* (St. Luke i.).

Therefore, though the Christian people sin, the Lord God will stand by His covenant: *If they profane My justice, and keep not My commandments, I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes. But My mercy I will not take away from Him* (the true David), *nor will I*

*suffer My truth to fail. Neither will I profane My covenant, and the words that proceed from My mouth I will not make void. Once I have sworn by My holiness: I will not lie unto David: His seed shall endure for ever and His throne as the sun before Me* (Psalm lxxxviii.).

Our Lord Jesus then is the true David; the Son of Man; our Brother; the Head of our fallen family. God's covenant is made with Him on our behalf, and made in His Sacred Blood. By virtue of this covenant, truth shall last in the Church to the end of time: *Nor will I suffer My truth to fail; and the everlasting Sacrifice shall endure with us to the end.* The Hidden God will never abandon His resting-place on the altar. His throne shall be as fixed and stable as the sun before Me. *His mercy is confirmed on us.*

F. With tenderness then, and devotion beyond all our thoughts, does the Blessed Mother unite with the thanksgiving of her Son.

*Give praise to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let Israel now say that He is good, that His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let them that fear the Lord now say, that His mercy endureth for ever* (Psalm cxviii.).

For henceforth, from the rising of the sun to the sunset, and from the sunset to the dawn, in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation, for My name is great among the Gentiles (Malach. i.).

Wheresoever the altar of the Holy Sacrifice stands, and the Hidden God resides in His humble dwelling-place, we may be sure that the word of the Lord will come true: *My eyes shall be open, and My ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and have sanctified this place that My name may be there for ever, and My eyes and My Heart may remain there perpetually* (2 Paral. vii.).



G. And to help the devotion of His little flock, and to give His Apostles the model for the future Liturgy and the psalmody of His Church, it is possible that our Lord introduces short and suitable antiphons from Holy Writ between the Psalms and through the Post-Communion service. Never before could His faithful disciples understand, as they do now, such words as these: *Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them as our God is present to our petitions* (Deut. iv. 7).

*How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth for the courts of the Lord* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

*The Lord ruleth me and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the waters of refreshment.*

*Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me.*

*Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebrieth me, how goodly it is* (Psalm xxii.).

H. And so the Sacred Pasch of the New Law is instituted:

In hac mensa novi regis,  
Novum Pascha nove legis,  
Phase vetus terminat.

In this divinest Feast  
Of our new King and Priest,  
All ancient rites have ceased.  
The new Pasch takes their place.

#### STATION IV.

#### THE END OF HOLY MASS.

A. *Gather up the fragments lest they be lost. They gathered up therefore* (St. John vi.).

Our Blessed Lord, we may assume, teaches His newly ordained priests to see carefully that no consecrated particles are left exposed to desecration. The unseen angels and archangels most reverently assist them in their holy task. *Let no part of the good gift overpass thee* (Eccclus. xiv.).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is stated by some writers that a devout and becoming shrine was found in the Coenaculum, where the Most Holy Sacrament was reserved to be a consolation and great joy to the Blessed Mother and the disciples after the Resurrection.

We may also here gather up a few scattered and fragmentary thoughts concerning what has taken place.

B. Does it not well repay the faithful who have taken the trouble to master the Latin language—the language of Holy Church—when they find themselves able to understand and devoutly relish that masterpiece among Christian lyrics, the *Lauda Sion* of St. Thomas of Aquin?

We may linger in spirit in the Cenacle, at the Sanctuary of the first Holy Mass, where our Lord Himself and His Blessed Mother and the holy Apostles and the other privileged saints have partaken of the Heavenly Banquet; and there at our leisure contemplate, as St. Ignatius teaches us in his second Method of Prayer, the words of this glorious hymn:

<i>Lauda Sion salvatorem,</i>	<i>Dogma datur Christianis,</i>
<i>Lauda ducent et pastorem,</i>	<i>Quod in carnem transit panis,</i>
<i>In hymnis et canticis.</i>	<i>Et vinum in sanguinem.</i>

Bone pastor, panis vere,  
Jesu nostri miserere:  
Tu nos pascere, nos tuere:  
Tu nos bona fac videre  
In terra viventium.

C. Among the inspired Psalms we have one that is an eulogy of David because he determined to build a temple for God.

*O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness.*

*How he swore to the Lord, he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob.*

*If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house: if I shall go up into the bed wherein I lie:*

*If I shall give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids,  
Or rest to my temples, until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob* (Psalm cxxxi.).

What wonder that David is largely blessed by God for such a zeal for His house! But how would his heart be stirred up to persevering efforts were he in our circumstances, and a place were wanted for a home, for an altar, for a tabernacle for Christ Jesus!

What is the Jewish temple when set beside the Christian sanctuary, where the perpetual lamp burns to tell us that the Word made Flesh is abiding there!

Blessed the poor, we say; but blessed also, thrice blessed the rich man who is privileged to raise an altar and a throne for Christ Jesus in the midst of His people!

D. Let us here again call to mind how in the days of Aggeus the Prophet, the Lord was angry with His people after their return from captivity, because in their eagerness to build homes for themselves, they said that they were too poor to build a house for Him. *Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house (My house) lie desolate? I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains, and upon all that the ground bringeth forth, and upon the oil, and upon all that the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon beasts, and upon all the labour of the hands. Why this chastisement, saith the Lord of hosts? Because My house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house (c. i.).*

God did not then want a Home on this earth of ours as He does now. It is an absolute necessity for Him to dwell now in the midst of His people, that He may be to them their Jesus, offering up *the everlasting Sacrifice* for them, and feeding them with His life-giving Body and Blood. Should we suffer as much as we do through false religions, and from the death-struggles between class and class, if men did not neglect the House of God and His holy altar?

E. St. Paul calls the attention of the Christians at Corinth to the fact that there are many sick among them and many deaths. *There are many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep* (1 Cor. xi.). He adds that these sicknesses and deaths are not a merely natural result of bad water or infected air; but a chastisement sent on account of the profanation of the Blessed Sacrament which was going on among them.

They neglect to *prove* themselves; that is, to examine

and cleanse their consciences before receiving the Blessed Eucharist. They received It without *discerning the Body of the Lord*; that is, without distinguishing the Bread of Heaven from common bread; and by these unworthy Communions, he tells them, "they are eating and drinking *judgment to themselves*."

"O God, Who in this wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Thy Blood, that we may ever find in ourselves the effects of Thy Redemption. Amen."

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.

Corpus Christi, salva me.

Sanguis Christi, inebria me.

Passio Christi, conforta me.

#### F. *Do this in memory of Me.*

When Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, *Arise, and be at once arose; the multitudes seeing it, feared and glorified God that gave such power to men* (St. Matt. ix.). If so, where are we to find a new canticle to express fear and amazement, and thanksgiving and great joy, now that the Lord has in the Cenacle given to men the supereminent sacerdotal power over His own Sacred Body and Precious Blood? *Rejoice unto Him with trembling* (Psalm ii.), the inspired Psalmist wrote in the days of old. Was that a prophetic admonition to the little flock in the Cenacle and to all of us?

G. Are the blessed angels trembling while with their perfect charity they glorify God Who hath given to men this ineffable power which He has not given to the Cherubim or Seraphim? Are they trembling when they see the extent and the fulness of the power given to men over their King?

Might they not expostulate: "O gracious Lord, our King, hast Thou in the excess of Thy condescension and love forgotten the counsel given by Thy Holy Spirit? *Give*

not to son or wife, brother or friend, power over thee while thou livest (Eccclus. xxxiii.). And yet it is not to brother or friend only, but to every priest, worthy and unworthy, that this power over Thee is given!"

H. And—what aggravates the risks to our King and our Lord—the power once given, it is for ever. The priest is so made one with Christ Jesus, so much a second self, an *alter Ego*, that neither man nor angel can sunder what God has joined. Man is made a priest for ever.

In every place, from sea to sea, the consecrated priest carries with him his power over Thee, our Lord! Neither can time take it from him; nor even death, which spares so little. For if called back, like Lazarus from the grave, Thy priest, Lord Jesus, would bring back his priesthood with him, for he is a priest for ever. Death breaks for ever the bond of union established by the Sacrament of Matrimony; but touches not the sacerdotal character.

I. *Semper et ubique*. Always and everywhere, as Holy Church tells us, we ought to thank Thee and love Thee, our God. Certainly, even though no one else cared to do it, Thy priest at least, always and everywhere ought to publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness—I will praise Thy name for ever, yea, for ever and for ever (Psalm cxliv.), since for ever and for ever he holds his priestly consecration.

J. The prophets of the Lord, the very greatest and holiest among them, had their power of working wonders, only *pro hac vice*, as we express it, that is, for this one occasion, not to use it at their pleasure always and everywhere. "Why, then, Lord God, great and terrible, dost Thou give Thy priests power to work their stupendous marvels always and everywhere?" Would it not be only wise and just and prudent and salutary to limit this perilous power to a few, exceeding few, and even then to license and sanction only for a few great festival-days? He answers: *My thoughts are above your thoughts* (Isaas lv.).

K. "Thy two chosen champions who are to fight Thy

battle in the latter days—Thy two witnesses, Thy two olive-trees, Thy two candlesticks, that stand before the Lord of the earth (Apoc. xi.),—they are to have power exceeding great when they return: *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will.*

"Yet the very least of Thy priests has a power not given at all to these great Saints.

"The power to turn water into blood is not like the power to change the grape-juice into Thy Sacred Blood, O Lord. And besides, those glorious Saints will hold their exceptional powers only during the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of their ministry; but every one of Thy priests has his powers for the remainder of his days on earth."

L. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

The Venerable Father Lanciaus writes that he knew intimately some holy servants of God who had received the extraordinary grace of working miracles from time to time; and he testifies that he always noticed that these privileged men, when they began to receive their exceptional favours from Heaven, became much more anxious to avoid every word or deed or thought that could offend the Lord their God. If so, he argues, what is to be the solicitude of a priest who receives his power and privilege, not from time to time, at distant intervals, but holds it always and everywhere!

Alas, is the sunlight less a blessing from our good God because we enjoy it every day? Is God's charity to us less precious because it is perpetual? Can it be right and natural to love Him less because His bounty is not merely fiftful and occasional?

M. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

On the first Holy Thursday night, when Jesus says these words, He says them only to friends; for to all, whom He consecrated on that night, He said: *You I have*

*called friends.* Surely this is what ought to be. The man who is to have this marvellous power over the Lord Jesus Christ—so that when he says, Come, the Lord must come, and be in his hands upon the altar—such a man ought to be nothing else but a most intimate, familiar and tender friend. Who but the Blessed among women was fit to be Mother to the Divine Child? who but Holy Joseph fit to be the foster-father of Jesus? And yet the priest has a power akin to theirs. He, too, has the Body and the Soul and the Divinity of the self-same Lord Jesus in his keeping. Surely none but a true and most tender-hearted friend should approach the altar to be consecrated for such an office. *Whence is this to Me?*

*N. Do ye this in memory of Me.*

St. Paul adds: That not even the best of friends, unless he be a man *that is called by God as Aaron was*, can intrude himself into this priestly dominion over the Lord Jesus Christ. What is written of all power and authority is true ten-fold here: *He that taketh power to himself unjustly shall be hated* (Ecclus. xx.).

Alas! alas! with what unanimity, with what a sorrowful intensity, but yet an unflinching, unhesitating intensity, will all the blessed saints and angels, and even the Mother of Mercy herself, unite in the final anathema pronounced against him who was a consecrated priest of Jesus Christ, and yet loved not Jesus Christ.

*O. Do ye this in remembrance of Me.*

The memory turns to what the heart loves; and the tongue speaks of what the heart loves.

The priest is to be a friend who truly loves Jesus: and it behoves him to come to the altar full of remembrance of Christ Jesus, of His Life, of His Death, of His Sacred Heart. Out of the abundance of the heart, his memory is to call up countless words and works of Jesus; and his tongue is to speak of Jesus.

The priest of Jesus Christ cannot easily be a midway neutral man, an indifferent, neither hot nor cold. If not a

true friend and intimate familiar, how shall he escape being a traitor?

*P. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord till He come* (1 Cor. xi.).

The Holy Mass is to be the *Memoriale Mortis Domini*. One reason why our Blessed Saviour instituted this Most Holy Sacrament under two kinds, is that He wished the Holy Mass to be, we may say, a scenic representation of His Death.

The Sacraments are outward signs of an inward grace. The Holy Mass, too, *the clean oblation*, is to be an unbloody representation and perpetuation of the Sacrifice which was offered with so much shedding of Blood on Calvary.

At the time of His Death, His Blood had been well-nigh drained out of His Body, by the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging, the Crowning, the Crucifixion. The spear that pierced His Side brought out the few drops remaining.

The separation of His Blood from His Body, or His Soul from His Body, can never take place again: *Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more. Death shall no more have dominion over Him* (Romans vi.). But our Saviour wished to represent the separation of His Sacred Blood from His Body. This is better done by our having the Most Holy Sacrament under two kinds, and by our hearing the words, *This is My Body. This is My Blood.* Holy Church makes a very resolute stand against all false teachers who pretend that they who receive under one kind receive only half a sacrament.

All the faithful know through her teaching that if Christ were not whole and entire under either kind, He would not be present with those who receive under both kinds. If the Sacred Host were nothing but the lifeless Body of Christ, and if the chalice contained nothing but His Sacred Blood, He would not be present and living either under one kind or under both. Under either kind, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ is truly received.

But under the appearance of bread the Body is present by its own right, and by virtue of the sacred word: *This is My Body*. The Precious Blood is only present under the form of bread by the right it now possesses of inseparable companionship with the Sacred Body. Had Mass been offered up while our Lord was dead, and after the Blood had been drained from His Body, the Sacred Blood would not have been present under the form of Bread.

*Q.* Before retiring from the Sanctuary of the first Holy Mass, we may reverently ask the question: Did our Blessed Saviour make known to His little flock the thanksgiving hymn of His own Most Holy Mother?

It is the will of His Eternal Father and His own that it shall be the evening-song of His future Church till time

is done. This is decreed : and so, *Day telleth unto day* the words of her Canticle : *And night unto night* passes on the knowledge of them. *There are no speeches nor languages* in which the song of the Mother of God is not heard. *The sound is gone forth into all the earth*, and her words to the *ends of the world*.

Did our Blessed Saviour wish to commence Himself the use of this Vesper song ? Did He wish to give gladness unspeakable to the listening choirs of angels by adding on to the Post-Communion hymns of thanksgiving—this song of praise, so sweet and so becoming—*Magnificat anima mea Dominum* ?

*Sit jucunda, sit decora,*

*Mentis jubilatio.*

## SCENE IX.

### THE DISCOURSE AFTER MASS.

As has been said, we are following, while we contemplate the scenes in the Cenacle, the order suggested by Father Coleridge, according to which, besides the short discourse by which our Saviour prepared His Apostles for the Blessed Eucharist and for their Priesthood, He spoke many more parting words after the Holy Mysteries were ended. Probably they were addressed only to the Apostles.

It falls in well with this arrangement that our Lord commences His Post-Communion exhortation with words that might well be suggested by the Holy Sacrifice just celebrated.

### STATION I.

*I am the True Vine* (St. John xv. 1).

A. "*Attendite*," for we are permitted to be present in spirit. "May the Blessed Mother and the holy disciples pray that we may have ears to hear, and that we may not merely be hearers but doers."

Therefore, the juice of the grape, which His little flock have just seen consecrated, is created to be a type or image of His Most Precious Blood. When the Eternal Father creates the vine that *wine may cheer the heart of man* (Psalm ciii.), He has in His thoughts something better

than the poor image; He has the True Vine, and the Sacred Blood of His Son Whom He will send. *I am the True Vine*, and My Blood is the Wine that shall inebriate the hearts of the elect. This chalice is the beautiful thing of His Church, filled with the wine that *germinates virgins* (Zach. ix.). Inebriated with the wine which they will drink in gladness from the *fountains of their Saviour*, the disciples of Jesus will, with heavenly courage, conquer the flesh, the world, and the powers of Hell.

If He is the Vine and we the branches, what wonder that He wishes to nourish us with His Sacred Blood ? Were the Lord's Supper only bread and wine, how could it effect all that the branch requires from the vine ?

### STATION II.

*I am the True Vine and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He will take away ; and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit* (vv. 1, 2).

A. Here is a short history of the Church—a short history, but a contemplation for many days.

We can then divide men into two great classes :—

1. Branches that bear no fruit, which after a time are cut off and cast away.

2. Branches which bear fruit, and which God is pruning and purging that they may bear more fruit.

Why, we sometimes ask impatiently, why is God afflicting me ? why has He taken from me my child ? my lands ? my friends ? We have the answer here. The careful, the all-wise Husbandman is purging and pruning, that the fruitful branch may bear more fruit. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

"*Attendite*," let us give heed, and lay up this Divine word in our hearts. This world is not our home. All that goes on here is but preparation for the eternal life in our Father's everlasting home.

## STATION III.

*Note you are clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you (v. 3).*

Already, after the washing of their feet, He had said to them, *You are clean*; but now, after the new word that He has spoken to them, *Take ye and eat, for this is My Body; take and drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of My Blood*, they are still more clean; their souls are filled with much more grace.

"Grant us, most merciful Jesus, so to reverence the Most Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Thy Blood, that we may ever experience in us the fruit of Thy Redemption. Amen."

## STATION IV.

*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. If any man abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth (vv. 4—6).*

A. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

"The Sacrament, that is, the outward sign and ceremony, passes quickly; but the union effected between your soul and Mine, your heart and Mine, your body and Mine, is not to pass away: *Abide in Me, and I in you.*"

B. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* His earnest longing is that we may be as anxious to abide with Him as He is to abide with us. *For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession* (Psalm cxxiv.). Ought this to be impossible or too difficult? According to human wisdom, who is the gainer by this union? Our Lord, or our souls? In the Holy Mass we pray that we may be "partakers of His Divinity, Who has vouchsafed to share

our humanity". What an exchange! We give Him the poor rags of our human infirmity, and in exchange we ask to be clothed with His Divine perfections. The holy Psalmist had good cause to expostulate with our Lord, saying: *What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man that Thou dost visit him?* Yet He not only visits us, but wishes to abide in us.

C. "But, Lord Jesus," each of us may say, "even if Thou volest Thy faithful servants and takest delight in abiding with them, yet, *whence is this to me*, my God, that Thou shouldst come to me, and wish to abide in me? *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou enter under my roof*" (St. Matt. viii.).

D. The wonder is partially explained when we remember the common saying that "love goes downwards"; that a good father and mother care more for their child, than their child for them. Our Father Who created, is infinitely more fond of His child than His child is of Him. There is no one but His own Divine Son Who knows Him and loves Him adequately and fully; and next to Him the Ever-Blessed Mother.

E. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* "*Se nascens dedit socium.*" He is born purposely to be our inseparable companion; two yoked together; two labouring together in the field; two grinding together in the mill. *All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him* (Coloss. iii.). We must mark that word by *Him*. In the Holy Mass the priest is taught to say that, "Through Him, with Him, and in Him, we give glory and honour to God". We have to keep close to Him, close as the chickens under the wing of the hen. Nay, closer much than this; close as the branch to the vine. Every true disciple is that man described in the goth Psalm, who *dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, and shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob*.

Holy Church teaches us to pray "that all our words

and works may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended". The sap from the vine is ever to be giving life to us. All our words and works must be begun and ended by virtue of a grace coming from His Sacred Heart.

F. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

It is especially during prayer that we must abide with Christ Jesus; and St. Ignatius' method of contemplation helps very much to this. If we are watching Him and listening to His Prayer in the Garden, or on the Cross, and dwelling on His words, and trying, as infants try, to utter in our poor way His words, and to say them more and more after His manner, virtue is all the while coming out from Him to us, and this method of praying is immeasurably more efficacious than if we pray alone and apart from Him.

G. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

One moment when we specially need to remain close to Christ our Lord, is when we have committed some sin, or some fault. For Satan then always tries to drag us down deeper by a sin against hope. *Væ soli—Voe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up* (Eccles. iv.). If we sin, O my Lord, must we leave Thee and go away? Blessed St. John says not so: *My little children, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just* (1 St. John ii.). If we go away from Him, where shall we find another to plead for us? It is a most powerful help towards rising when we have sinned and lost in part our relish for God, to remember that if we are fickle, He is not. If we are tired of Him, He is not tired of us. If we lose hope in ourselves, He has not departed of us. *For charity hopeth all things.*

H. *He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.*

*Unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who build it* (Psalms cxvii.). If the Apostles and disciples are to work greater wonders than He worked, this

is only because He vouchsafes to work in them and by them. St. John in his Gospel writes (c. iii.): *Jesus abode there and baptised*; but in chap. iv. we find these words: *Jesus Himself did not baptise, but His disciples*. From these two statements it is clear that when they baptise, He baptises; when they absolve, He absolves; when they consecrate, He consecrates. St. Paul also explains this to the Corinthians, who are forming parties and saying: *I am Paul's, I am Apollo's. What then, he asks, is Apollo? what is Paul?* And immediately answers: *The ministers of Him Whom you have believed*. The members, the instruments, the mouthpiece of Jesus Christ. *Therefore I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase* (1 Cor. iii.). And if Christ is not abiding in His minister, when he speaks words or preaches, the words are only the noise of the sounding cymbal. *"Vivit vero in me Christus"*—*But Christ is living and working in me* (Galat. ii.).

"*Sine tuo numine, nihil est in homine*." Without the assisting grace of Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, there is nothing at all in men. "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*" (Psalms cxlii.). "For Thy own Name's sake, bless our poor efforts to help our neighbours."

I. *Without Me you can do nothing.*

If then we want to bear fruit, when we correct children or servants, or argue with Protestants, or exhort sinners to a better life, we must first take care to be abiding in Christ, and to have Him abiding with us. Not only every Apostle, but every Christian is to be, in a certain sense and a true sense, a Saviour, a living branch on the Vine, bearing good fruit.

J. *Without Me you can do nothing.* We are like paralysed creatures. We cannot lift hand or foot, or speak a word, unless helped by God. If I walk, "*element manus tua deducit me*" (Psalms cxxxviii.)—*Thy hand shall lead me*; *Thy right hand shall hold me*. In our supernatural life, we are still more helpless without our God. *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost* (1 Cor. xii.).

K. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* We sometimes tire

of our friends, if they stay too long with us, but our God never tires of us while we stay with Him. He only wearies of us when we leave Him by sin. Is it not time that we grow quite weary of being away from Him? and cease to be tired of being with Him? If He is to be our Joy, our Heaven, our God throughout eternity, how is it that we cannot find contentment in Him here?

*L. If any man abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth.*

By the mouth of Ezechiel, our Lord has taught us how worthless is a vine branch, cut off from the stem: *Son of Man, what shall be made of the wood of the vine: Shall wood be taken of it to do any work? or shall a pin be made of it, for any vessel to hang upon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel* (c. xv.). He wishes us to contemplate attentively and not hurriedly, this picture of a man who has not the grace of Christ in him. He may have great beauty, great strength of body, and many eminent talents, and a high position, and large possessions, and many followers and servants; but if he has not the life of grace in him, he is a vine, branch cut off and withered, quite worthless in God's eyes, and fit for nothing but the fire. He will be thrown aside as utterly valueless, and remain for ever and for ever an outcast thing in the darkness of the land of oblivion (Psalm lxxx.). *Thou shalt be fuel for the fire. Thou shalt be forgotten. I the Lord have spoken it* (Ezech. xxi.).

M. Once more we must bring to our minds the everlasting gratitude with which our Saviour will bless us, and love us with a special love if we have, during our exile here, helped Him to rescue the souls which He redeemed at so great a price, from being cast away for ever as a withered branch. "Oh," He says to us with all the earnestness of His loving Heart, "*Tantus labor non sit cassus*—Help Me, that all the love with which My Father created, and all the love with which I redeemed, may not be in vain and void."

## STATION V.

*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you* (v. 7.).

Our Blessed Saviour is adding on word to word in order to move them and to move us to make perpetual the union with Him begun by the Holy Eucharist. We often complain that our prayers are not heard. Who is to blame? Does our Blessed Saviour forget His promises? Is He liable to fickle changes? We may be quite sure that He does not forget, nor change His mind, but we forget how St. James warns us that when we pray we must ask aright (c. i.). St. Paul, too, tells us that *he who sows sparingly, shall reap sparingly* (2 Cor. ix.). Our Lord's faithful servants who wish much to abide in Him and to have His words abiding in them, take care to remove from their souls things that necessarily drive our Lord away, and then they are not disappointed in His promise: *Ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you*. It is but a repetition of an older promise: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart* (Psalm xxxvi.).

## STATION VI.

*In this is My Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples* (v. 8.).

Here He adds the motive which weighs most with His own Sacred Heart. "My Father is glorified if you bring forth very much fruit. In the sight of all the fallen angels, in the face of the great world that makes war with Satan against God, My Eternal Father is glorified; and all His creatures are obliged to own that He has been a good Father, and that He acted wisely and most lovingly in allowing His Divine Son to become your companion, your ransom, your food, and your reward, when they see that My Passion and Death are not void, but bear great fruit in your souls."



"O Sacred Heart of Jesus, give us a great desire to glorify our Father in Heaven by bearing very much fruit, and to be in *spirit and in truth* (St. John iv.) Thy disciples."

## STATION VII.

*As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

*Abide in My love* (v. 9).

A. Still He is urging them and urging us to strive always to render perpetual the intimacy established in Holy Communion. He is labouring to draw us on to His great commandment: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*

B. *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

What a meditation! *Why art thou sorrowful, O my soul? why dost thou trouble me?* Where is he that complains of being lonely and abandoned? Let such a one only find a little time, and allow these words of Jesus Christ to sink into his soul: *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.* For if there is even one person who loves you with a great love, with a love that you can never measure, with a boundless love, with that inconceivable love wherewith a Father infinitely good loves His Son infinitely deserving, can you be really lonely, really abandoned?

Your sadness, your trouble, your depression, exist only because you never find time to listen to such a word as this, and ponder on it, and lay it up in your heart: *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

C. *Abide in My love.*

How incessantly, and with what subtle arguments the father of lies works upon us to persuade us that we have no right to love our God! that love is not for us! Let us be wise and make leisure, and give heed most attentively to this word of Jesus Christ: *Abide in My love.* "Live habitually in the thought of My love for you, and in returning love to Me. In the morning and at nightfall, and in the working hours of the mid-day; in your winter and your summer, in your dark days and bright days, *Abide in My*

*love.*" Never must we forget that the one great commandment is, that we are to love our Lord. We must not serve God as an austere master, but take delight in Him. If we have a letter to write and a prayer to say, and always from disinclination put the prayer aside to another time, we do not take delight in our Lord. If when we are bound to go to prayer, a voice easily persuades us to arrive as late as may be without grievous sin, we do not delight in the Lord.

D. *Abide in My love.*

As an all-powerful God loves us with an infinite love, what wonder that He uses all His authority and commands us to love Him?

Is it tyranny to demand love from us? If He had commanded us to serve Him most diligently and perseveringly, every day and all day long, but forbidden us sternly to love Him, our lot would have been a sad one.

Kings require their slaves and servants to obey and serve very diligently, but command them most severely not to presume to fall in love with the royal children. Such service may be very hard; but when Jacob *serves* and *loves* at the same time, we read that the seven years of service *seemed but a few days because of the greatness of his love* (Genesis xxix.).

Any one who loves truly, and is truly loved, is strengthened by this love to bear many troubles. For this reason, among many others, we must say with intensity: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* Blessed be our good God, because He has *commanded* us to love Him. If He had only *permitted* us to love Him, this would still have been infinite goodness and condescension; but when He loves us and *commands* us to love Him, this earth is no longer the valley of tears, the land of banishment. It is the outer court of Heaven.

E. If our God does so love us, how could He do otherwise than give us His Body and His Blood as our food? A Lord's Supper consisting of mere bread and wine was never the invention of His Sacred Heart.

## STATION VIII.

*If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father's commandments and do abide in His love (v. 10).*

He wishes for love, and for true love, and therefore teaches them and teaches us what is the safest and surest test of true love. It is to keep His commandments with some share of that filial fidelity wherewith He did His Father's will. If the commandment to love our God were taken away, the other commandments would not be at all a light burden or a sweet yoke; but so long as our hearts are warmed by filial love, and we can say in the spirit of love: *Our Father, may Thy will be done on earth cheerfully and thoroughly as in Heaven, His burden is light, and His yoke is sweet.*

## STATION IX.

*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled (v. 11).*

How often we turn away from words of our Lord and complain that they are a *hard saying*! Let us then rest here a little while, and allow this great truth to take root in our souls, that whenever He asks for a sacrifice from us, or for some self-denial, or for obedience to His commands, He is always speaking that *My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be filled*. It is His way to offer the worst wine first, and the sweet and excellent wine after, if we let Him. When we deny self, when we rob ourselves to give an alms, we console unspeakably the Heart of our Lord, because we give Him a plea for blessing us, a right to enrich us. For, as has been already explained, His Heart is yearning more to give blessings than the mother in labour to bring forth her child. When therefore we do some act which gives Him the necessary excuse for giving us more grace, then He has His desire that *My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled*.

## STATION X.

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (v. 12).*

They are to abide then in that love and union established in Holy Communion, and they are to prove and maintain their love by keeping His commandments. Now, what are His commandments? They are all summed up in this New Commandment which He has given to them this night: *That you love one another, as I have loved you.*

*This is My commandment*; My special commandment; My new commandment. Here is the great fruit that Holy Communion is to produce. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a fire. *God is love* (1 St. John iv.). He does not always wish us to remain after Holy Communion with Magdalen at His feet, seeking to enjoy that *conversation* (which) *hath no bitterness*, or His company in which there is not any *tediousness, but joy and gladness*; but oftentimes the work He has for us to do is like St. Peter's: "If thou lovest Me, *feed My lambs, feed My sheep*".

## STATION XI.

*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends (v. 13).*

A. But now He Himself is going to lay down His life not for friends, but for men who are enemies to Him: *The just for the unjust*; and this is His new commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us.

B. One of our Lord's promises this night is that the Holy Spirit will teach them many things which they are not ready for at present. Is not the Heroic Act which Holy Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, encourages us to make, a greater act of love than it would be to die for a friend?

## STATION XII.

*You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you (v. 14).*

In family life a servant does not rise to be a friend because he does his master's bidding. In the army a soldier who obeys does not become the friend of his commanding officer. *Oh, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.). But the fact is that we are not only His servants, but His children also: and He with infinite partiality allows immeasurably more than full value to all we do; and holds us to be His true friends if we merely do, like faithful servants, what He wills: though He knows quite well that He wills nothing but what is entirely for our good.

Another reason why He is so exceedingly indulgent to us is because He sees how Lucifer through hatred of Him persecutes us.

## STATION XIII.

*I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord does. But I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you (v. 15).*

A. *I will not now call you servants.*

He is loving to the end; revealing more and more the tenderness of His Heart. It is indeed a fitting Post-Communion discourse.

How could He any longer treat them only as servants now that He has fed them with His own Sacred Flesh and Blood, and made them one with Him? This establishes a relationship between Him and them more intimate than the tie between mother and child, or man and wife.

B. And what does He desire but to have us also always as His friends? What is His wish but to speak intimately to us also, and disclose to us all that He has heard of His Father? How consoled and delighted He is when we are willing to listen to Him!

O hateful father of lies! O servant full of malice! O murderer from the beginning! how fatally have you deceived us whenever you persuaded us to devote all our time and

thought to trifling, and to have none to give to conversation with our Divine Master, Who is longing to teach us whatsoever He has heard of His Father! "Alas! alas!" the blessed in Heaven lament, "the good God, the wise God, the great God, the God of all power and majesty, on Whose face the angels long to gaze, is not good enough to content poor deluded men. They must have the refuse of the earth and the husks of swine to make them happy."

C. What a true friend and benefactor to other men he is who makes leisure and listens to the secrets of Christ Jesus, and is afterwards able to spread truth and grace among many!

## STATION XIV.

*You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you (v. 16).*

A. If a prince marries a peasant's daughter, it is a great comfort to her, and a great honour to her, and a good ground for trust and confidence, if she hears her husband say to her: *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* You did not seek me for my wealth and position. You did not intrigue to win this marriage. I chose you because I valued you.

So is it a strong ground for great confidence when we hear our Lord say: *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.* If the future wholly depended on our choice in the past, there would be no sure footing, as our will and our tastes are so fickle; but *I have chosen you*, and I do not change. "*Beatus quem elegisti*" (Psalm lxxiv.).

B. Again, when a prince chooses a peasant girl as his bride, he may not know the defects in her character, nor some flaws in her past social history: but when our Lord chose us, He knew us thoroughly and most intimately; *He needed not that any man should give testimony of man; for He knew what was in man* (St. John ii.). Therefore as He knew all the worst of us when He chose us, this is firm and solid ground for lifelong hope. St. Paul reminds us of this ground of hope, that it was not when we were good

that Christ died for us ; but *when as yet we were sinners* (Romans v.). He knew us thoroughly, and still He chose us. As then He is all wise, He could not make a foolish choice. And as He is unchangeable, He will not suddenly repent and cast us away. *I have chosen thee, and have not cast thee away* (Isaias xli.).

## STATION XV.

*I have chosen you and appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain* (v. 16).

A. What He says to His Apostles is in proportion. true of each of us : *I have chosen you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.* It is not God's design that we should go to Heaven alone. *To every one of them He gave commandment concerning his neighbour* (Ecclus. xvii.).

Those in the Church, those in the Ark, must stretch out their hands to those perishing outside. *Wo unto me if I preach not the Gospel* (1 Cor. ix.), St. Paul wrote. So, in due measure, wo to us if we help not perishing souls.

B. *I have chosen you that you should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.*

Are we bringing forth some good fruit that will live after us and endure ? If we give an alms for the education of a good priest ; if we give an alms for the building of a church or a school ; if we give an alms for the printing of a good book, we are doing a good that will endure. The Holy Ghost writes of the wicked : *Their fruits shall be unprofitable and soon to eat, and fit for nothing* (Wisdom iv.); and their lament in the everlasting prison-house is this : *We also being born, forthwith ceased to be, and have been able to show no mark of virtue, but are consumed in our wickedness* (Wisdom v.).

C. Another question is : " Have I brought forth any evil fruit that will remain ? "

One of our great poets has written this true word, true in more senses than one : " The evil that men do lives after

them ". If we have ever occasioned a scandal that lasts and continues to injure souls, or if we had hindered some good work that would have produced lasting fruits, we have sore need of that grace given to Zachæus, who said : *If I have wronged any man, I restore him four-fold* (St. Luke xix.). *From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant* (Psalm xviii.). Our good Cardinal Wiseman said before he died that it consoled him to think that he had not hindered good.

## STATION XVI.

*That whatsoever you may ask the Father in My name, He may give it you* (v. 16).

One reward, then, of those who bring forth much fruit is that their prayers are speedily heard : *Loose the bands of wickedness ; undo the bundles that oppress : let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall hear. Thou shalt cry and He will say, Here I am* (Isaias lviii.).

## STATION XVII.

*These things I command you, that you love one another* (v. 17).

Here is the scope and aim of all our Lord's teaching. Here is the great fruit of Holy Communion, that our hearts learn from the Heart of our Lord to love others and bring forth fruit in their souls. Seeing that our Saviour so often returns to this precept, and that, too, in these closing hours of His life when all His words are more precious, what wonder that the disciple whom He loved had in his old age only one sermon : *Little children, love one another !*

## STATION XVIII.

*If the world hate you, know that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own ; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you* (vv. 18, 19).

A. *You are not of the world.*

The *world* is a vast association, gathered together by Lucifer out of all countries and classes and conditions of men, and out of all religious denominations. The old belong to it, and the young are members. Protestants, High and Low Church, Methodists, Jews, Buddhists, and Catholics are all willingly admitted. The children of the Catholic Church are specially welcome. Why so? because traitors can damage the cause of Christ more than open enemies. The *world*—this vast association, has a creed and a code of its own. This creed and code of the *world* is: irreconcilable hostility against the doctrine of Christ crucified, that we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him. St. Ignatius, adhering to the Gospel of our Lord, teaches that *we are to use creatures—as we use medicines—inasmuch as they are a help to salvation; and that if they are no help, but a hindrance, we must rid ourselves of them.*

The world, taught by Lucifer, detests this doctrine; and preaches loudly: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered; let none of us go without his part in luxury* (Wisdom ii.). The world's creed is that riches, pleasures, and honours are a heaven, and to be loved and enjoyed for their own sake.

Consequently, the world is ever at enmity with Jesus. *Because He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold: for His life is not like other men's, and His ways are very different. We are esteemed by Him as triflers; and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and He preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death* (Wisdom ii.).

This is a declaration of war to the bitter end. And our Lord's response is: "*Væ mundo*"—*Wo to the world!* (St. Matt. xviii.). And when the compassionate Heart of

our Lord is compelled at last to utter this word: *Wo to the world!* there is more terror in that short word than in all the threats that the hostile world can utter.

This much then is clear, that between Christ and the world there is war as active as it can be. What are the consequences that follow from this?

B. *First.* A very comforting one; that if Satan, the ruler of the world of this darkness (Ephes. vi.), hates us and persecutes us and troubles us with temptations, it is simply and entirely because he first hated Christ our Lord. *If the world hateth you, know that it hath hated Me before you.* He has no quarrel with us, save that we are created by God, and redeemed by Christ; God's children, and God's image. If, then, our troubles and temptations come on us because we come from God and belong to God, our Blessed Lord will know well how to fight for us and protect us. *He will overshadow thee with His shoulders; and under His wings thou shalt trust* (Psalm xc.).

C. *Secondly*, as the war is raging so fiercely—the world hateth you—and with such determination on both sides, neutrality is out of the question on this earth, which is simply a battlefield. We cannot possibly serve two masters when the two masters are waging a war of extermination. If we serve one, we bid open defiance to the other, and fling contempt and scorn at him. *If you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

D. *The world hateth you.*

We sometimes hear Catholics say: "I get on very well with men of the world. I see no reason why Catholics should not take their place as men of the world."

In reply, we say that there is a right way and a wrong way of being men of the world. One can be a man of the world without belonging to the anti-Christian world. We must of course distinguish between the world which God created and declared to be good, and the world which

Christ denounces: that vast and powerful association of which we are now speaking.

If then you are nominally a Catholic, but in reality one of the bad *world's* "own," the *world* has of course very special reasons to cherish you and make much of you.

If therefore the *world* that is Christ's enemy welcomes you and is good to you, are you quite sure that *you are not of (this) world*? For our Lord says very clearly, *because you are not of the world, the world hateth you*. If you are not of the *world*, if you are a true disciple of Christ, how do you explain the fact that you are popular with the worldly?

Blessed Sir Thomas More for a time seemed likely to enjoy a large share of the sunshine of the world; but very soon he had to choose which master he would serve, and because he chose Christ Jesus, the *world* hated him and beheaded him.

It is most desirable for the cause of God that Catholics should win by their industry and ability, and through God's blessing, such a position as will widen their influence. For then their good example and fidelity may draw many from the camp of Satan to the camp of Christ. But it will be a miracle, like the Miracle of the Burning Bush, if their conscientious fidelity to Christ Jesus, while it attracts many, does not oftentimes draw upon them the hatred of those devoted to the *world*.

#### STATION XIX.

*Remember My word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake (vv. 20, 21).*

A. *The servant is not greater than his master.*

"Attendie." This is an obvious truth: who can doubt it? But the Prophet writes: *All the land is made desolate because there is none that considereth in the heart* (Jerem. xii.). We know many Gospel truths superficially;

but till we make leisure and mediate on them, and in colloquies petition earnestly for grace to be *doers of the Law*, the Gospel truths never come home to our hearts; we do not digest and assimilate the heavenly food and make it part of ourselves.

If we really believe that we are not greater than our Master, as we see that His own people do not hearken to *Him*, why are we sometimes so disturbed and so angry when a servant, or a pupil, or one of our children, will not give heed to *our* words? or if the Protestant whom we wish to convert does not surrender to *our* arguments?

B. *But all these things will be done to you for My name's sake.*

If we have a firm faith, these words will often give us wonderful strength and courage. We are sometimes greatly troubled and surprised that temptation comes. We forget the forewarning given us by the Holy Spirit: *When thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation*. If we resolve to serve God, if we come to prayer, and frequent the sacraments, if we begin to give alms and practise self-denial, the devil is watching: therefore, *prepare thy soul for temptation*. If we give up the desire of serving God, he will cease to trouble us and be our friend. It is simply because we bear the name of Christ, and wear His badges and appear as His soldiers, that we are so persecuted. *If you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice*. So wrote St. Peter, and he practised what he wrote when he himself was crucified.

C. *If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*. Observe how it is after Holy Communion that our Lord reveals the coming dangers to His disciples. Let one of our favourite petitions after receiving the Body of the Lord be, *Passio Christi, conforta me*.

The soul may suffer from dryness and desolation at the Holy Table; but if the Bread from Heaven gives courage for the troubles of the day, we surely have no reason to think that such a Communion is not a good one. Knowing

that the altar of the Blessed Sacrament was the table against *those who afflict me* (Palm xxii.), the early Christians were exhorted to receive very frequently, and even daily, in order to have strength for martyrdom. It was the virtue which came out from the Body of the Lord that enabled St. Peter to write these words, and also put them in practice: *Wherefore you shall greatly rejoice if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations. For this is thanksworthy if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. If doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thanksworthy before God* (1 St. Peter i. ii.). Flesh and blood does not teach this kind of wisdom.

## STATION XX.

*But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me* (v. 21).

A. *Because they know not Him that sent Me.*

So that when wronged and persecuted, we ought rather to feel compassion for those who do the wrong, because they know not Jesus Christ and His Eternal Father, than to desire vengeance. This is our Saviour's glorious teaching. *Bless them that curse you, pray for them that calumniate you. Say: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* We must dwell on this great truth till we thoroughly master it, that the wrong-doer is much more to be pitied than the sufferer.

B. *They know not what they do.*

It is recorded that a gentleman sitting in his parlour near to a glass door, saw a man, apparently on set purpose, walk across his beautiful flower-bed and trample down his chosen flowers. He started up, and grasping a stick, threw open the glass door and rushed at the offender. He was on the point of striking a heavy blow, when he suddenly perceived that the poor man was quite blind. If he had struck that blow, when would he in after years have been able to forgive himself? They are blind; *they know not Him*

*that sent Me. They know not what they do.* This is our Blessed Saviour's plea for all of us.

C. *These things they will do to you for My name's sake.*

When a wrong is done to us from outside, it always remains in our power to determine whether it shall prove a great blessing or a great curse. Of the Holy Child, Simeon said: *He is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many.* It rests with each of us to choose whether Christ shall be our ruin or our resurrection. So is it, too, when an injury comes. If we choose rightly, it will be a saving medicine and bring us much grace. If we choose wrongly, it will become a deadly poison. No calumny, no insult, ever harms us until we deliberately choose to sin by revenge.

## STATION XXI.

*If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: they hated Me without cause* (vv. 22—25).

A. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin.*

The brighter the light, the greater the sin if the light be rejected.

*That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more* (St. Luke xii.).

These words concern us much. For assuredly *He that is mighty hath done great things for us.*

B. *He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also.*

First, because He is the delegate of His Father and His representative. Secondly, because He is the perfect image of His Father, as He said to St. Philip: *He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also.*

Even if He were not the Eternal Son of God, con-substantial with the Father, so long as He is God's delegate and Messias, to hate and reject Him is to reject God. Therefore, when the people insisted on having a King, instead of Samuel who was the ruler appointed by God, the Lord said to him: *They have not rejected thee, but Me, that I should not reign over them* (1 Kings viii.).

All our brethren are, as we know, God's representatives; and therefore He says to each one, *He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of My eye* (Zach. ii.). But those who hold legitimate authority from Him are in a much more special way His representatives. This is why He speaks so strongly of disobedience. *It is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel: and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey* (1 Kings xv.).

When God sets up a man in His own place as a Father or a Superior, He well knows that such a one is likely to become a sign which shall be contradicted. Therefore, by great promises and great threats He safeguards those in authority.

C. The malice of the Jewish Rulers was far worse, because they hated not only His office, but His personal holiness, which was the image of His Father's infinite sanctity.

D. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin.*

Before our Lord required His people to believe in Him, He proved, beyond doubt, by miracles that He was sent by God; because He always asks for a *reasonable service*. Satan persuades men to shut their eyes to our Lord's claims to their obedience; and yet they flatter themselves that they possess strong faith and great strength of mind because they believe in Irving or Wesley or Luther or

some clergyman whom they fancy, who yet have no credentials of any kind to show.

E. *They hated Me without cause.*

What a terrible awakening for a Christian it will be in the everlasting prison-house to find that the serpent utterly deceived him with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he allowed himself to be most miserably duped; so that he had nothing but hatred for Him, *Who loved* (him) *and delivered Himself up for* (him) (Galat. ii.).

Heart-rending are the accounts that have been written of the hopeless remorse that tortured the man who in a fit of jealousy, utterly groundless, murdered his innocent and devoted wife, and discovered when too late that the calm-nies against her were studiously whisped into his ear by a cruel enemy envious of his happiness: *They hated Me without cause.—The serpent deceived me.*

F. *They hated Me without cause.*

Good-hearted Catholics who do not like to think evil are sometimes, if they are not thoroughly instructed, overawed and staggered by the confident boldness with which enemies of Christ assert that it is His fault if they are sceptics, because He has left His religion without sufficient title-deeds and grounds of proof. If we take care to instruct ourselves well and understand our religion as we ought to do, we shall see at once that these men are blaming our Lord *without cause*.

We must never forget these words: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*

How could our Lord sincerely wish *all men to come to the knowledge of the truth*, and yet leave behind Him no proofs of His mission, and no credentials for His Church that can satisfy logical minds? Champions of unbelief can only be strong and bold when we are ignorant, and do not know how to make it clear that our obedience to Christ and His Church is most reasonable. Christianity has for its foundation the Resurrection. Catholics ought to instruct themselves so as to be able to show to men that we cannot *reasonably* call in question the fact of the Resurrection; and that history ceases to be trustworthy if the Resurrection is impugned.<sup>1</sup> In like manner with regard to the Church, we are free to believe that individuals attached to sects may be in invincible ignorance, and have not sinned grievously against the Faith,

<sup>1</sup> See the little volume called *Human Testimony*, by FitzArthur. London: Kegan Paul and Co.



and therefore that if they were in childhood validly baptised they are still members of Christ's Church; but at the same time we must always bear in mind and proclaim that Christ has set His Church in a blaze of light; and that He has abundantly kept His promise that He would leave a path to truth so straight that *fools shall not err therein* (Isaiah xxxv.). The promise of God was that the throne of David, which is the throne of Christ, shall be as *the sun before Me, as the moon perfect for ever, and a faithful witness in Heaven*. Has His promise been forgotten? Is the Apostolic See anything else but a never-failing source of light and truth perennial as the sun and moon, a faithful witness set in the firmament that every eye may see?

### STATION XXII.

*But when the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning. These things I have spoken, that you may not be scandalised. They will put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God.*

*And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

*But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come you may remember that I told you of them.*

*But I told you not these things from the beginning, because I was with you (St. John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 1—5).*

The words that concern the coming of the Holy Ghost have been considered in the Discourse before the Institution of the Holy Eucharist.

*A. The hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God.*

We may see how great a grace has come through the Holy Sacrifice and the First Communion, from the fact that our Saviour speaks to them now so openly about the sufferings in store for them, and tells them clearly that they are near at hand: *The hour cometh*. He knows that before two months are over, Peter, John, and others will have been cruelly scourged for His sake and will be entering on a long course of persecution.

"O Sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace. *Passio Christi, conforta me.*"

*B. These things they will do, because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

Again our Blessed Saviour reminds us of this truth so much wanted, that when we commit sin, it is always because we know not our good God and our most loving Lord Jesus Christ. We are duped and deceived; we put *darkness for light, and light for darkness: bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter* (Isaiah v.). Therefore, lost souls bewail their past culpable ignorance: *The way of the Lord we have not known* (Wisdom v.). Let us then try diligently to know our Father and our Redeemer more and more by careful contemplation; for so we shall certainly keep much further away from sin.

*C. They have not known the Father nor Me (v. 3).*

Again too He reminds us of another truth which He wishes us never to forget, that those who hate us, out of hatred to Him, are blind, and therefore fit objects of great compassion. Well He knows how the prayer of the first martyr Stephen will win a marvellous grace for Saul, who is joining in the persecution of that unoffending Saint simply because he is blind and knows not Jesus Christ. It is one of the inventions of our Lord's charity, to allow wicked men sometimes to persecute the holy, in order that the prayers of the persecuted may win grace for those who are persecuting and never praying for themselves.

*D. These things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them (v. 4).*

How hard it is when we are suffering much ourselves, to be very thoughtful for others; but our Blessed Saviour, in spite of all the tide of sorrows which He sees coming to overwhelm Him, is always full of thought for His disciples, and leaves no word unsaid that will help them to recover from the scandal occasioned by His Sacred Passion.

"Compassionate Heart of Jesus, give us some little share of that charity which was in Thee strong as death, and stronger. *Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*"

*But I told you not these things from the beginning, because I was with you (v. 5).*

A difficulty presents itself here. For in St. Matthew's Gospel (c. x.) our Lord forewarns His Apostles of coming troubles, even as He does here: *They will scourge you in their synagogues. You shall be hated of all men, and the rest.*

How then does He now say: *I told you not these things from the beginning?*

1. Some Holy Fathers assume that St. Matthew does not aim at giving our Lord's discourses and actions in their proper chronological order: that he very probably in his narrative introduced into discourses of the first or second year of the Public Life of Jesus words spoken at the Last Supper or after the Resurrection. His object was simply to give our Lord's words, which have their heavenly value even when detached from their context. St. John, writing later, wished to be more exact in following the order of time.

2. Other learned commentators prefer to think that when our Saviour says, *I told you not these things from the beginning*, He is alluding only to what He has just been saying about the coming of the Holy Ghost. The sense would thus be: I did not speak to you of the coming of the Holy Ghost, because I was myself with you as your Paraclete, to teach you and comfort you. So, too, when He says just before: *These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalised*: they understood the sense to be: I have now made known to you the coming of the Holy Ghost, that you may not lose hope and courage by my going away from you.

This explanation does not, however, quite fit in with the context. For the words, *I told you not these things from the beginning*, ought, at least, it would seem, to include not only the coming of the Holy Ghost, but also the persecutions spoken of immediately before.

3. Therefore other interpreters say that our Saviour is alluding both to the coming of the Holy Ghost and to the persecutions, concerning which He is speaking more plainly now, by telling them (1) that His enemies will kill them; and (2) that the persecutions are near at hand. As long as He is with them it is arranged by His Eternal Father that they are not to be molested.

#### STATION XXIII.

*And now I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have spoken these things, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell*

*you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come: but if I go, I will send Him to you (vv. 5—7).*

A. *None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?* St. Thomas had said, *Lord, we know not whither Thou goest* (c. xiv.), but neither he nor any of the others, had pressed for an answer. Had they known more of our Lord's plans, they would not have been so downcast.

B. As has been said before, this is already the fourth time that He consoles His Apostles by the assurance that the Holy Spirit shall come. How well He intends to fulfil that other promise uttered in the discourse before the Holy Mass: *I will not leave you orphans*. He Himself remains with His Church in the Blessed Eucharist, and His Blessed Mother is to remain to nurse the infancy of His Church; and now, as if all this were little, the Holy Spirit shall come to teach, to guide, to give life and love to all His disciples.

Had not our Lord a right to say that we need not envy those who saw Him in the flesh, and that we who have not seen and have believed are blessed?

#### STATION XXIV.

*And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment.*

*Of sin, because they believed not in Me.*

*And of justice, because I go to the Father and you shall see Me no longer.*

*And of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged (vv. 8—11).*

#### A. *Of sin.*

The Church, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, will recognise clearly how great the sin is of those who rejected Christ

#### B. *Of justice.*

The Holy Spirit will reveal clearly to the Church that

Christ, by rising from the dead, and ascending to His Father in Heaven, and thence sending, according to His promise, the Holy Ghost, has proved Himself to be no impostor, but eminently just and holy, and therefore that the world which rejects Him deserves condemnation.

*C. Of judgment.*

Because men will see that the devil, the prince of this world, is cast out and conquered by the Apostles of Christ, and that therefore the world, which is the slave and ally of Satan, is also judged and condemned.

STATION XXV.

*He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine : therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine, and show it to you (v. 14).*

*He shall receive of Mine.*

Our Lord had said just above : *I will send Him.*

These and other similar texts are used to prove the Procession of the Holy Ghost both from the Father and the Son. They also establish the Divinity of Christ : since *all things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine*. The Divinity of the Holy Ghost is proved from the words in Station XXII. : it is *expedient for you that I go* ; since if the Holy Ghost were not God it would not be *expedient* for the disciples that Christ, Who is God, should go and the Holy Ghost come in His place. He Who comes must be equal to Him Who goes, otherwise they would lose much by the exchange.

STATION XXVI.

*A little while and now you shall not see Me : and again a little while and you shall see Me : because I go to the Father (v. 16).*

A. Now our Lord begins to impress more strongly on their minds that He is about to leave them. Already He had said to them, *I go to the Father, but I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you*. And again : *Now I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you ask Me, whither goest Thou ? But because I have spoken these things, sorrow hath filled your hearts*. To allay somewhat this sorrow He had

assured them that the Holy Ghost would come to be their Comforter. Now He returns to the subject, and wishes them to know something more of what is going to happen : *A little while and you shall not see Me : and again a little while and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father*.

One interpretation is : *I go to the Father*, that is, I am about to die. Therefore, after a few hours you shall not see Me. But a little while after, and you will see Me risen in joy. Others interpret "a little while," that is, "after My Ascension you shall not see Me : but life is short," so that again after a little while you will see me in Heaven".

B. *Sorrow hath filled your hearts*. May we have great sorrow for those unhappy hours when by sin we forced our Lord to depart from us.

STATION XXVII.

*Then some of the disciples said one to another : What is this that He saith to us : A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me, and because I go to the Father ? They said therefore, What is this that He saith : A little while ? We know not what He speaketh (vv. 17, 18).*

The Apostles are perplexed. "For," as St. John tells us later, in the account of the Resurrection : *As yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from the dead*. Therefore, these words are an enigma to them : *A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me*. And yet Christ has spoken very plainly. But what can words do without Thy assisting grace, Holy Spirit of Truth ? *Sine tuo munimine nihil est in homine*.

And if God wills us to become little children and to learn from a Master, what will words or books profit without a Master ?

STATION XXVIII.

*And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him : and He said to them : Of this do you inquire among yourselves,*

*because I said: A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me?* (v. 19).

Our Blessed Saviour is kindly and gently proving His Divinity to them more and more by letting them see that He hears their secret whispers and reads their inmost thoughts.

*As the Lord liveth, His faithful servants used to say of old, As the Lord liveth, in Whose sight I stand* (3 Kings xvii.).

"Grant us, merciful Lord, grace to walk in Thy presence, and to say with a lively faith, *My bone is not hidden from Thee: in Thy book all shall be written*" (Psalm cxxxviii.). *God is witness of his reins and a true searcher of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue* (Wisdom i.).

#### STATION XXIX.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy* (v. 20)

A. To men of this world these would be heavy tidings; but the Apostles soon after learned to understand well how inestimably they are blessed and privileged in being allowed to drink of His chalice with Him. Looking back now, Holy Church never tires of repeating this word: "*Nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus*"—*Exceedingly, too much, too highly, are Thy friends honoured, O God* (Psalm cxxxviii.).

B. Let us convince and persuade ourselves of this truth: Better far a short mourning now, and joy everlasting hereafter.

Better the bitter cup first, and then the sweet for ever. Better, a thousand times better, weeping with Jesus, than gladness with the world.

C. *Of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, St. Peter writes, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* (2 St. Peter iii.). St. Paul, who had seen some of the secrets of the Everlasting Home in

Heaven, had this same idea concerning time here and eternity hereafter. *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure an eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. iv.).

Our Blessed Saviour is then speaking, in the first place, of the days of sorrow that are close at hand, and the joyful days that are to follow the Resurrection; but He also has before His mind the future career of His Apostles, and the eternal reward laid up for them.

#### STATION XXX.

*A woman when she is in labour hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So you also now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you* (vv. 21, 22).

As soon as our Lord was risen from the dead, and the Holy Spirit was sent down, then the Apostles were filled with a joy which no man could take from them. Theirs was that peace which the world could not give; nor could the world take it away. But the promise was not verified in all its fulness until they reached the everlasting city on the foundations of which are inscribed the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (Apoc. xxi.), that Eternal Home which hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it. *For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof* (Apoc. xxi.).

#### STATION XXXI.

*And in that day you shall not ask Me anything: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full* (vv. 23, 24).

A. *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*

Higher and higher our Lord is raising the needy whom He lifted from the earth, *that He may place them with princes, with the princes of His people* (Psalm cxii.).

Here He is speaking not merely of the days close at hand, when He shall be risen from the dead, but of their sojourn on earth after He shall be taken from their sight; and He gives them this comforting assurance: "It is true that you will not be able to come to Me and ask Me what you want, as you have done till now, but I now give you this most solemn promise, *Amen, amen, I say to you* (it is, as St. Augustine says, as if He bound Himself by oath), that when I am gone from you, you will remain on earth as My proxies and delegates; and you will ask My Father and your Father in *My name* for all that you want, and *anything you ask for in My name, He will give it to you.*"

B. *In My name.*

In prayer we are all allowed so far to personate Christ as to ask in His Name, by His rights and merits. To a certain extent we share the priest's privilege who absolves in His Name, and consecrates in His Name. For in prayer the Christian may speak as one united to Christ Jesus, and representing Him; a member of *His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Ephes. v.).

C. *In My name.*

When we ask things in Christ's name, we must of course ask only such things as Christ would desire for us. "Weigh well your petitions," St. Gregory writes, "see whether you are asking in the name of Jesus, that is, if you are asking for the joys and blessings won for you by His redemption. For, in the house of Jesus (the Church of Jesus), you are not seeking Jesus, if in His eternal temple you ask importunately only for things temporal. Thus one asks in his prayer for a wife, another begs for a villa, a third is praying for a robe, a fourth is earnestly beseeching for food and sustenance."

D. *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name.*

"Attendite." Every word of this solemn promise deserves to be well weighed. To ask properly in our Lord's Name:

1. We must not be at enmity with Him; we must be contrite for all our sins.

2. We must pray with faith and hope; *nothing wavering*, as St. James writes.

3. We must ask for such things as our Lord can wish for us.

4. We must ask, as He wishes us to ask, with persevering importunity, asking and knocking till the loaf is given.

E. *Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

When Eliseus was about to work a miracle for the poor widow woman, he said: *Go borrow of all thy neighbours empty vessels not a few.* He knew that the miraculous oil would flow as long as she presented an empty vessel to hold more. So our Lord wishes us to ask and ask again, and continue to ask a long time, that our joy may be full, that we may have grace in good measure, *pressed down and shaken together, and running over* (St. Luke vi.).

When King Joas, threatened by the Syrians, also came for help to Eliseus, saying in sorrow: *O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the guide thereof: the Prophet said to him, Take the arrows, and strike with an arrow upon the ground. And he struck three times, and stood still. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, If thou hadst smitten five or six or seven times, thou hadst smitten Syria even to utter destruction: but now three times shalt thou smite it* (4 Kings xiii.).

So is it when we are praying. Our Lord grieves exceedingly because we break off our prayers too soon, and do not continue to importune till our joy is full. *He spoke also a parable to them that we ought always to pray and not to faint* (St. Luke xviii.).

## STATION XXXII.

*These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father (v. 25).*

*In proverbs, or parables, means in veiled and figurative language which they have not fully understood. After the Resurrection our Lord explained the Scripture more clearly; and when the Holy Ghost came down He taught the Apostles fully and perfectly all truth. Veni Creator Spiritus.*

## STATION XXXIII.

*In that day you shall ask in My name; and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you.*

*For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God (vv. 26, 27).*

We must note carefully what pains our Blessed Lord takes to comfort His disciples; and how often He repeats to them this consoling assurance that when He is gone, they will not feel the need of His visible assistance, as they have hitherto done, since the Holy Ghost will fill them with faith and love, and His Father will love them, because they have believed in Him and loved Him. So that they will have a right to ask in His Name, and will obtain whatever they so ask, without it being necessary that He should be visibly present, as heretofore, to ask for them.

## STATION XXXIV.

*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and I go to the Father.*

*His disciples say to Him: Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou canst forth from God (vv. 28, 29).*

A. Our Lord had before now said clearly, *I go to the*

*Father. He had also said clearly: The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again (St. Mark ix.). But as His Apostles had not light to understand these words when spoken, it was as if He had spoken in proverbs and parables. Now He has fed them with His Body and His Blood, and as the end draws nigh He is loving to the end, that is, He is pouring out more and more grace from His loving Heart, and the Apostles believe more firmly and understand His words more clearly.*

*B. Now we know that Thou knowest all things. By this we believe that Thou canst forth from God.*

His disciples are now in a state of consolation. They are not under delusion, for they have received a large increase of faith, of hope, of charity; but our Blessed Saviour knows the storm that is coming, and that a measure of grace which might be sufficient for the time of calm and quiet is not sufficient for the time of trial that is close at hand. The Blessed Eucharist has strengthened them and enlightened them much; but not till the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit shall be poured out in abundance upon them, will they be fit for the battle that is to rage between them and the powers of darkness. Therefore, seeing them now cheered and consoled by the increase of light which they perceive in themselves, He gently adds a warning word against presumption upon the graces just received through the Holy Sacrament.

## STATION XXXV.

*Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me (vv. 31—32).*

A. When our Lord is speaking these words, He sees Satan and the princes of darkness present, with their

malicious and murderous eyes fixed on His Apostles, and burning with a most fierce rage and jealousy to be allowed to measure their strength with these favoured disciples. He also sees Judas and the priests busily engaged in gathering and arming their followers. He therefore understands how exceedingly His little flock need earnest prayer, and a most complete mistrust of their own strength. Hence His solemn word of caution, followed later by so many others: *You shall be scattered, and shall leave Me alone.*

At once, however, He adds another word to quicken their faith, and to impress upon their minds that He is not to be conquered in the coming struggle: *Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*

B. *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me (v. 32).*

O it is good for us to be here, listening to this word of our Saviour. Which of us could find the burden of life unbearable, if we would make leisure, and ponder on this word till virtue comes out from His Heart into our poor hearts? For who is there among us that is not the child of our Heavenly Father? Who is there that has not a right to say: *Yet after all, I am not alone in this sad world, because the Father is with me? My God is with me. My Lord Jesus Christ, Who loved me more than His own life, is with me. A young man lying sick in a remote part of India would be cheered unspeakably if he suddenly found out that a very good and kind relative of his was living close by. "If that be so," he would say, "I am not alone in this strange land." Can a man be alone who has his Creator near him? his good God near him? Jesus Christ with His loving Heart near him? and near him also the Blessed among women, who is charged to be a Mother to him?*

C. *When is man truly alone? Then only when he himself has obliged his God, his Creator, his Father, his Redeemer to abandon him. O then indeed it may truly be*

said, *Væ soli*—wo to him who is in this most deplorable loneliness.

The Holy Spirit tells us that during the Egyptian darkness, the wretched people of the country lay there exiled from the eternal Providence—scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness. But that misery lasted only three days.

"By Thy bitter Death and Passion, Lord Jesus, deliver us from everlasting loneliness and eternal separation from Thee."

Well may the Christian who has lost his soul gnash with his teeth and pine away, when he finds himself given up entirely by his own choice to the government and tyranny of Satan, and that the providence of God no longer interferes to protect him. *The dark veil of forgetfulness hangs between him and the charity of the loving God, Who once was his Father. He is to pine away for ever, to wait for ever in the land of forgetfulness, where God is never any more called Father. Shall Thy wonders, O Lord, be known in the dark, and Thy justice in the land of forgetfulness? (Psalm lxxxvii.).*

#### STATION XXXVI.

*These things I have spoken, that in Me you may have peace.*

*In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence,*

*I have overcome the world (v. 33).*

A. *That in Me you may have peace.*

"How, Blessed Lord, are they to have peace in Thee? Hast Thou not just said that they are to be scared and scattered, and in their terror to forget all Thy miracles and Thy Divine power, and Thy tender care of them, and to be scandalised and discouraged?"

Yes, in the first outburst of the storm they will be scared and scattered. Perchance, however, if they would follow their Divine Master's counsel and example, and would watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation, the strength already given them in Holy Communion would be multiplied, and would be sufficient for the crisis. But even if their hearts fail now for the moment, and they leave

Him alone, He cannot therefore abandon *them* and leave *them* alone; very soon He will gather them again, and abide with them. And the days will come when in the world indeed they shall have distress, sore distress and numberless tribulations, but in the midst of their distress they will find their peace in Him. For while contemplating Him in His infirmities, virtue will come out to them, and they will hear Him say that word: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*

In these days of grace that are coming, enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, they will understand that their Master conquered the world by meekly enduring all that the world could inflict on Him; that His meekness and patience tired out both the world and the princes of the world. They remained baffled, and He was victorious. It is St. Denis the Areopagite who speaks of the *almighty weakness* of Christ Jesus.

*B. Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*

How comes it then that the world has still such a destructive power? Men declare that it is quite impossible to resist the fascinations and the exceeding great power of the world.

One answer might be, that now it has power only over those who are willing to be conquered. A further explanation is this: He has conquered this world, not by crushing and destroying its good things, but by the method which a wise mother adopts to get the better of her wilful little child bent on keeping possession of a dangerous plaything; she does not wrench it away by force, but shows the child something more bright and attractive, and at once the mischievous toy is dropped that the brighter one may be secured. So has our Lord done with us in order to conquer the world. To win us away from this world, He has shown us His own loveliness. His plan was to become Himself the alluring apple hanging on the tree. *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.). If we choose to make leisure and look at Him, little

by little we shall be drawn strongly to Him, and the world will lose all its power over us.

But if we will not find time to look at our Lord Jesus Christ, and to know Him, we shall not love Him; and if we love not Him, this world will have over us all its ancient power. For, as has been said, our Lord has not destroyed all that was attractive in the universe, but has set before us something better—the goodness of the Creator, the goodness of our Redeemer—so that we may love the Giver more than His gifts, and the Creator more than His work.

## SCENE X.

### THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD.

Here we may, perhaps, in contemplation assume that our Blessed Saviour rises. Do His little flock also stand around Him; or do they kneel while He pours forth from the depths of His Heart that prayer which we may consider the close of the thanksgiving service after the Holy Mass and the great First Communion?

We will fix the eyes of our soul on His reverential attitude, on the heavenly beauty of His countenance inflamed by the fire burning in His Heart. We will listen to the tones of His voice, so solemn and so full of emotion. We will watch our Blessed Lady, who with her heart and her whole being responds to every word that comes from the Heart of her Son. We will also notice how virtue passes from our Saviour into the souls of His disciples, and how they all with great fervour join in His farewell prayer.

### STATION I.

*Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given to Him* (St. John xvii. 1, 2).

A. What is our Blessed Saviour asking for when He says, *Glorify Thy Son?*

1. His glory is to be obedient to His Father unto death, to prove that His love is stronger than death, and all manner of torments of soul and body.



2. His glory is to endure all that the enemies of His Father can inflict on Him, and to conquer them by endurance.

3. His glory is to rescue the children of His Father out of the grasp of Satan, at the cost of His own life. Therefore, His prayer is that every shape and form of sorrow which can glorify His Father may come to Him, but that all the designs of His enemies may be so controlled and overruled, that all shall *co-operate unto good*, and promote the glory of His Father.

Have we courage to unite in this prayer of our Lord? "Glorify me, my God; give me the honour, the glory, the blessed privilege of drinking of Thy chalice with Thee, of drawing many souls to Thee, and, by suffering myself, of filling up the things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ" (Coloss. i.).

B. *As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him.*

Therefore, again, "Father, glorify Thy Son by overruling the testimony of witnesses and the sentences of judges, and by multiplying miracles in such a way that it shall be manifest to all that Thy Son is not a malefactor, but Thy Christ, Thy Messias, Thy well-beloved and only Son, that so He may be able to bring to eternal life all whom Thou hast given to Him".

The Sacred Heart of Jesus has only one desire, to use the boundless power given to Him for the salvation of all the children of His Father.

*Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*

C. What wonderful things have those holy men done for God and for the salvation of souls, who, in union with their Divine Master, devoted all their powers to God's work, and said heartily and most earnestly: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will. All these things Thou gavest to me, my God, to Thee I give them all back."

#### STATION II.

*Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent (v. 3).*

A. "If eternal life is to know Thee, O Father, and Thy Son, then multiply signs and wonders, and order all things so, that the humiliations of My Passion may not hinder men from knowing Me, and through Me arriving at the knowledge of Thee."

B. If eternal life consists in knowing Jesus Christ and the Eternal Father, we can begin our Heaven here by labouring diligently and praying earnestly to know Them more and more perfectly.

C. Let us fix this idea of Heaven in our minds, that close intimacy with our Father and with our Lord Jesus Christ will be our Heaven, and that through knowing Them we shall necessarily become like to Them.

#### STATION III.

*I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had, before the world was, with Thee (vv. 4, 5).*

A. "O vos omnes attendite." Let us stay and listen most attentively, and contemplate our Blessed Saviour as He speaks; for so virtue will come out from His Heart to ours: *Come ye unto Him and be enlightened* (Psalm xxxiii.).

*I have glorified Thee on earth.*

As we listen to these words, perchance we shall be moved to look back in the bitterness of our soul at days and months and years gone by during which we have not glorified our Creator, but dishonoured Him, and dishonoured Jesus Christ, our most merciful Redeemer.

B. And we may find too a strong desire growing within us to be able to say before we die: Yes, my God, I have tried to glorify Thee.

1. It is a great glory to God when in the presence of His enemies we take delight in Him, and are glad to be with Him, and do not shun prayer, but seek it with desire.

2. We glorify God when we resolutely adopt Gospel maxims in presence of the *world*: forgiving injuries, renouncing forbidden pleasures, preferring the heavenly luxury of almsgiving to the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

3. We glorify God when we will not suffer immodesty or *covetousness* even to be named among us as *becometh the saints* (Ephes. v.).

C. *I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.*

Alas! O my God, do I even know what the work is that Thou gavest me to do?

This much we know at least, that our main work, the one thing necessary, is to save our souls by praising, reverencing, and serving our God. One thing that we certainly have to do is to die in God's grace.

But, besides this, to every man God also gave *commandment concerning his neighbour* (Ecclus. xvii.).

How much of this work have we accomplished? Let us at least try in the eleventh hour to redeem time past by labouring diligently to help some poor sinners to return to God.

#### STATION IV.

*And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with the glory which*

*I had, before the world was, with Thee* (v. 5).

A. "Raise My Body to life again, and glorify My Body and My Soul, and bring about My Ascension into Heaven, that with My Sacred Humanity united to Me, I may sit at Thy right hand to possess the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

With all our hearts let us join in this prayer: "Our Father, glorify Thy Divine Son Jesus".

B. Whether our Lord be glorified much or little on earth, and whether His saints be glorified or not by men,

He and they will be glorified by their Father in Heaven. But let our prayer be, "May Thy Kingdom come on earth also, Lord Jesus, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven".

#### STATION V.

*I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them, and they have kept Thy word* (v. 6).

*I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given to Me.*

Christian priests! Christian parents! Christian teachers! "Attendite." Let us listen to these words and learn what our duty is. We have to make God more known to those whom God has given to us. These children, these poor people entrusted to me—"Thine they were, O my God, and to me Thou gavest them. O God, grant that I may have the grace so to train them that hereafter I may be able to say: *They have kept Thy word.*"

#### STATION VI.

*Now they have known that all the things Thou hast given Me are from Thee. Because the words which Thou gavest to Me I have given to them, and they have received them and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me* (vv. 7, 8).

A. Our Blessed Saviour's constant endeavour is to make it known that all that He has comes from His Father.

St. Paul presses this lesson upon us: *What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?* (1 Cor. iv.). Our most earnest desire ought to be that all our words and works may begin from Thee, dear Lord, and by Thee be happily ended; that so there may be nothing that is merely our own in our teaching or our enterprises. For whatever is only from me, is ill done, whatever is well done is Thy work,

O Lord. "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.*" *If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth, that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen* (1 St. Peter iv.).

## STATION VII.

*I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine* (v. 9).

In this special parting prayer, our Lord is praying for these chosen disciples, begging for them the large graces which their state will require, begging His Father to have mercy on them *according to His great mercy*, which, as the devout Father Segneri writes, includes a large share of the Cross. He is not now praying for the world; but elsewhere He does pray for the world; as, for instance, on the Cross: *Father, forgive them*. And later on, in this very prayer He begs that the disciples may be one in order that *the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*. There is a world for which our Lord prays and works; thus St. John writes: *God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved through Him* (iii. 17). St. Paul also writes: *For God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself* (2 Cor. v.). And again, *God wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.). If our Lord excludes the world from His prayer, it is, St. Augustine writes, only those who obstinately adhere to sin, and to the anti-Christian spirit of the world.

## STATION VIII.

*And all My things are Thine and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them* (v. 10).

A. In these words our Blessed Saviour once more clearly teaches His own Divinity and equality with His Father. Speaking as the Son of Man, He had said, *Thine they were,*

*to Me Thou gavest them.* But He now adds, as Son of God: *All Thy things are Mine, and I am glorified in them*, because Thy glory is My glory.

B. Our Father in Heaven said to the elder son who was jealous of the returned prodigal: *Thou art always with Me, and all that I have is thine* (St. Luke xv.). What is the will of our good God but to share all that He can share with each of us? If then we will only with filial hearts believe in this loving liberality of God, we too can say with our Lord: *All my things are Thine* (O my God), *and Thine are mine.*

## STATION IX.

*And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world; and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given to Me, that they may be one as We also are* (v. 11).

A. *Now I am not in the world.*

His Death is so near that He speaks as if it were come. Moreover, once His Sacred Passion begins, He is practically taken away from His disciples.

B. *Holy Father, keep them in Thy name.*

This is a parting cry of His Heart for His little flock; for He is full of compassion for their coming bereavement, and with all the tenderness and earnestness of His charity He beseeches His Father to protect them.

*Keep them in Thy name.* That is, "May Thy name of Father, and Thy name of God, be sanctified in them. May Thy name be a reality to them. May they always find a protection in Thy name. May they always draw strength and hope and love from their belief that Thou art their Father and their God." One valued commentator, Father Ribera, thinks that in these words our Blessed Lord prays for His Apostles, and obtains what He asks, that they may never during their apostolic career fall away from grace by mortal sin.

*C. That they may be one as We also are.*

Here is another chief desire of His Heart, that the unity of the Most Blessed Trinity may be represented in His Church; and some of the most esteemed commentators think that in making this prayer He is expressing what the Blessed Eucharist is to do. The bread is made out of many grains of wheat. The wine is the juice of many grapes. The many grains and the many grapes become His one Body and His Sacred Blood. Then in the next place His one Body and Blood becomes the food of all His disciples; and they do not convert this food into their substance, but they are all changed by it and become one body and His members: *Of His flesh and of His bones* (Ephes. v.). Now therefore the cry of our Lord's Heart is that this union and unity may be perfect: that all may have one faith, one Baptism, one Holy Sacrifice, one Heavenly Banquet to nourish them; one mind and one heart: all loving one God and one Lord Jesus Christ, and for His sake loving cordially one another.

## STATION X.

*While I was with them I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept* (v. 12).

*A. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept.*

How happy the death-bed of Christian parents and Christian priests, and Christian Superiors, and all in charge of others, if they can say humbly when dying: *While I was with them I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest me have I kept.* This great grace given to them is better than length of days, better than all earthly glory. O Lord, Thy mercy is better than lives (Psalm lxxii.).

*B. I kept them in Thy name.*

That is, as Thy delegate. How often our Saviour reminds us of this fundamental truth, that man is only God's steward! A steward gives leases and collects rents in his master's name. Therefore St. Paul writes: *All things what-*

*soever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Col. iii.).

*C. In Thy name.*

How much more easy it is, when we have charge of others, to keep them safe if we keep them in God's name, than if we act independently in our own names! So long as we act in God's name, God acts with us and in us. How much better is work done when God does it, than when we do it!

*D. In Thy name.*

What wonders men have wrought when they speak and act in God's name! St. Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate: *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk; and he leaping up stood and walked and went* (Acts iii.).

When God sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh in His name, He said to him: *I have appointed thee the God of Pharaoh* (Exodus vii.). And we have heard our Lord promise that His faithful disciples who act in His name, shall do the works I do, and greater than these shall they do (St. John xiv.).

*E. In Thy name.*

Satan and all his ministers are much troubled and alarmed when a man speaks in the name of Christ Jesus. The High Priest, when the Apostles were brought before the Council, said to them: *Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in His name. And after they had scourged them, again they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus.*

St. Peter's answer was: *We ought to obey God rather than men* (Acts v.).

With St. Peter and St. Paul then, we will try to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## STATION XI.

*And none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled (v. 12).*

A. *The son of perdition.*

The 108th Psalm is, as we have seen, applied by St. Peter to Judas (Acts i.).

In that terrible Psalm it is written: *When he is judged, may he go out condemned; and this cause is assigned for his reprobation: Because he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar; and the broken in heart, to put him to death.*

"O compassionate and loving Heart of Jesus, deliver us from hardness of heart, make us always remember to show mercy."

B. *That the Scripture may be fulfilled.* Judas is not condemned in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled; but the Prophet is inspired to write what God sees happening in time not yet come to us.

## STATION XII.

*And now I come to Thee, and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy filled in themselves (v. 13).*

A. *My joy; My peace.*

The joy and peace in the Heart of our Lord is one that lives on through all His tribulations. This is the joy and peace He wishes to bequeath to His Apostles. When He said to the Samaritan woman: *The water that I will give shall become a fountain of water springing up to life everlasting*, she, though she did not know the full value of this heavenly water, said wisely: *Sir, give me of this water.* So must we say.

B. *That they may have My joy filled in themselves.*

Here we have the constant undying wish of our Lord's Heart. Whether He consoles us or rebukes, rewards or chastises, He is always labouring most earnestly that *they may have My joy filled in themselves.* To human eyes

what so appalling as the torments of the martyrs? And yet all the while our Lord is giving them as a high privilege a special share of His chalice, that they may have *My joy filled in themselves.*

"Compassionate Lord Jesus, give us Thy joy and give us Thy peace."

## STATION XIII.

*I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as also I am not of the world (v. 14).*

A. Here is a thought for Christian priests to dwell upon attentively. Because *I have given them Thy word—they are not of the world*, but are hated by the world. If we then preach rightly and faithfully the Gospel of Christ, those who hear will not be of the world.

B. *I have given them Thy word and—they are not of the world.*

Every word from God's mouth is not only our bread, but a strong medicine against the spirit of the world.

## STATION XIV.

*I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil (v. 15).*

Sometimes God does take out of life His young saint: *He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind (Wisdom iv.).* For the same reason God calls many innocent souls to the secure shelter of the cloister; but the Apostles of Christ and the great body of Christian men and women are to live in the world and leaven the world. For these the prayer of our Lord is: *Not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.* This is to be the father's and the mother's most earnest prayer for their children: "O my God, keep them from evil".

## STATION XV.

*They are not of the world, as I am not of the world (v. 16).*

Christian priests, Christian laity, men and women, "attendie". We must dwell upon this word. For in the world we must live; but our Divine Master ought to be able to say with truth of us: *They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.* Can He speak so of us?

## STATION XVI.

*Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth (v. 17).*

The father of lies has persuaded many, very many, that they can be holy without truth; that true doctrine is not necessary for holiness; that men can believe what they please, and still be charitable and holy. Our Lord knows, on the contrary, that real holiness must be founded on truth; that is, on God's revealed words.

For if God is love, so also God is truth. *I am the Truth.* Hence St. Paul writes: *He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.* He joins salvation and truth together: *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*

## STATION XVII.

*Thou hast sent Me into the world. I have also sent them into the world (v. 18).*

As then *I and the Father are one*; "My Apostles and My Church are sent and commissioned by the same God Who sent Me. Therefore, *He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me*" (St. Luke x.).

## STATION XVIII.

*And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth (v. 19).*

A. St. Augustine interprets: "I sanctify My Humanity, and by making My disciples members of My Body, sanctify

them also". By partaking of His Sacred Body and Blood His brethren become holy with His holiness. *Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*

B. *For them do I sanctify Myself.*

Fathers and mothers and priests and all in authority may rouse themselves to fervour by this thought. For the sake of those under me I must sanctify myself.

## STATION XIX.

*And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me (v. 20).*

So far our Lord has been making a special farewell prayer for His Apostles. Now He turns His thoughts to us who are to come after, but who are as present to His mind as those in the Supper Room. For us then also He prays. Oh, let us listen; for if His prayer was efficacious for His Apostles, so is it also for His present Church. It won grace for St. Lawrence, for St. Francis, for St. Ignatius, for St. Teresa, and wins abundant grace for us.

## STATION XX.

*That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me (v. 21).*

A. *That they may be one in Us.*

St. Cyril and others think that our Blessed Saviour is praying that through the Blessed Eucharist we may be all made one, and kept in unity; with one faith and one strong bond of charity.

B. *That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*

Mark, too, this second word: "That men seeing charity among My disciples may believe that *Thou hast sent Me*". By want of charity we scandalise men and make them disbelieve in Christ's Church. *Pierce, O Lord, my flesh with Thy fear* (Psalm cxviii.), for Thou hast said: *Wo to him by whom the scandal cometh* (St. Matt. xviii.).

## STATION XXI.

*And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one as we also are one (v. 22). I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one (v. 23).*

Commentators of great name, such as St. Hilary, the Jesuit Cardinal Toletus, and Father Ribera, S.J., understand these words of our Lord in reference to the Blessed Eucharist. The glory which Thou hast given Me by uniting the Divine Nature to My Human Nature, I have given to them by uniting My Body and Blood and Divinity with them in the Sacrament of My Love: *I in them, and Thou in Me.*

*That they may be one, as we also are one, and that they may be made perfect in one.* This is what St. Paul teaches. *The Chalice of Benediction which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord? For we being many, are one Bread, one Body, all that partake of one Bread (1 Cor. x.).* When we eat the bread of this earth, we change it into our own flesh and blood; but St. Paul teaches us, that by all feeding on the Bread of Heaven, we all become changed by Its Divine power, and become *one Bread, one Body.*

## STATION XXII.

*That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me (v. 23).*

A. If then we make the proper use of the Divine Banquet of the Blessed Eucharist, receiving It worthily and receiving It frequently, we become more and more changed into Christ Jesus, and we all have one mind and one heart; and the men of this world—*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine (Ephes. ii.),* and perpetually urged on by the father of lies, who *was a murderer from the beginning (St. John viii.),* to hate one another, and to raise up self on

the ruins of others—when they see peace and security and charity and self-denial reigning in Christ's Church, have their eyes opened, and acknowledge with St. Peter: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God (St. Matt. xvi.). Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life (St. John v.).*

B. "Attendite." Stay here a little while, and let us ask ourselves, are we making use as we ought of the Divine Banquet? Is it working in us the unity of faith and the unity of heavenly charity? Are we by being true members of His Body, drawing many others to Christ Jesus? Or are we afflicting most grievously the Heart of our Lord, by scandalising the weak by our want of charity, and driving them further away from Him? *Who to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless, woe to the man by whom the scandal cometh (St. Matt. xviii.).*

C. And (that) the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.

All the love that our Lord has for us comes from His Eternal Father. He is living on earth in order that by seeing Him, we may come to know His Father. *Philip, he who sees Me, sees the Father.* If our Lord has loved us so well as to deliver Himself up for us, our Father Who is in Heaven has also loved us so well as to give His only Son for us. When we look therefore for the cause of all that love which our Lord has had for us, we have to ascend higher to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. It is because His Eternal Father has with infinite love created us to His own image, and made us His children, that we have so great a value in the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore He wishes our daily and hourly prayer to be: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name. May all men love and cherish Thy Name of Father.*

## STATION XXIII.

*Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world (v. 24).*

*A. That where I am, they also may be.*

He is loving to the end. This ardent prayer from His most compassionate Heart He lets them hear as a preparation for the sorrow that is coming. He wishes that this assurance, *I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given to Me may be with Me*, may come back and back to their troubled souls when all seems lost.

*B. They also whom Thou hast given Me.—My glory, which Thou hast given Me.*

Our Blessed Lord never tires of acknowledging that all comes to Him from His Father, and declaring how much His Father has loved Him.

*"Vere dignum.* It is truly right and just and fair and salutary that always and everywhere we give Thee thanks, Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God." We ought to be able habitually to say most heartily: *Laudamus te, benedicimus te*—"We praise Thee, O God, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we give thanks to Thee".

*C.* How wise it would also be to cherish this conception of the poor, and of our neighbours: *They whom Thou hast given me, O my God.*

## STATION XXIV.

*Just Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me (v. 25).*

A little before, His prayer was: *Holy Father*, sanctify them, keep them in holiness. Now He appeals to the justice of His Father, and He wishes His faithful Apostles to know that through His merits, and because His disciples become one with Him, they can in His name

claim their reward as their just due. Thus St. Paul is not afraid to write: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day: and not only unto me, but to them also that love His coming (2 Timothy iv.)*

## STATION XXV.

*I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known (v. 26).*

"I will make it known more fully when the Holy Spirit sent by Me shall come."

"Fulfil Thy promise, O Lord, also in us. Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Grant us a strong faith to believe in His name. Make known His name of Father to us."

## STATION XXVI.

*That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them (v. 26).*

*A.* That the grace of the Holy Spirit may be in them; because the Holy Spirit is the love wherewith the Father loveth His Son. Hence St. Paul writes: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us (Romans v.).*

*Veni Creator Spiritus. Fons vivus, ignis, charitas, et spiritalis unctio.*

*B. And I in them.*

Here our Lord again returns to the Blessed Eucharist, and with these words ends His prayer, and brings to a close this most holy Eucharistic solemnity.

*So they did eat, and were filled exceedingly, and He gave them their desire (Psalm lxxvii.)<sup>1</sup>*

*Man ate the Bread of Angels (Psalm lxxvii.).*

*Let the just feast, and rejoice before God, and be delighted with gladness. Sing ye to God. . . . God in His Holy Place, God Who maketh men of one manner to dwell in a house.*

<sup>1</sup> See Communion, Quinquagesima Sunday.



*The mountain of God is a fat mountain. A mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell: for there the Lord shall dwell unto the end (Psaln lxvii.).*

## SCENE XI.

## FAREWELL TO THE SANCTUARY.

*And a hymn being said they went out unto Mount Olives (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And when they had said a hymn they went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. *A hymn being said.*

We have already seen that the hymn here referred to may have been said immediately after the Holy Mass as a thanksgiving service. It is, however, possible that our Blessed Saviour wishes, at the end of the First Night Watch, to close the sacred scenes enacted in the Cenacle, which were never to be forgotten in time or in eternity, with a special thanksgiving, in keeping with the hymn of praise prescribed at the end of the ancient Pasch, that type and figure now gone by and passed away for ever—its place is found no more. We have seen that some students of Jewish rites are of opinion that the psalms recited at the end of the legal Pasch were the 113th, the *In exitu Israel*, and the four Psalms immediately following. Others, however, incline to the view that the song of praise was made up of the three or four Psalms at the end of the Psalter.

If these Psalms formed the parting hymn immediately before leaving the Supper-Room, we may contemplate the great devotion inspired into "the little flock" when Jesus the High Priest, acting as their Precentor, begins with all the ardour of His inflamed Heart to recite such words as these:

*Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle. Let His praise be in the Church of the Saints.*

*Let Israel rejoice in Him that made Him; and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.*

This would be a most devout farewell of the disciples to the holy sanctuary where they have received two ineffable gifts: the first, the Body and Blood of the Lord; and the second, the power to do what the High Priest Jesus did.

## SCENE XII.

## PREPARATION FOR DEPARTURE IN THE GUEST-ROOM.

## STATION I.

## HOLY MARY.

*They went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

The entire celebration, including the Pasch of the Old Law, and the Pasch of the New and Everlasting Covenant, is now ended.

Our Blessed Saviour may have to lay aside some special robes which He wore during the Holy Sacrifice. The Apostles, too, may have to put off the pilgrim's garment, or some other that they put on for the sacramental ordination. There is also, as we have said, the Most Holy Sacrament to be with becoming love and reverence carried for reservation to the place prepared for It. There may be moreover the sacred vessels, and the consecrated chrism to be laid by in a suitable keeping-place.

"*O vos omnes*"—*O all you who pass by the way*, while all these things are being arranged, stay a little, turn aside for a while to watch and to listen; for the hour of the great conflict is now close at hand. And we may contemplate during these short moments of preparation how our Lord has gone aside with His Holy Mother to say a parting word to her; to ask her to repeat once more her consent to all that He is about to do and to suffer. For still His wish is to be to the end most filial, most reverent, most lovingly subject to her. "Say once again, Holy Mother, the word you said to the faithful Archangel, St. Gabriel; the word you have never retracted." And she would say now, in quite a new sense, and with quite a new fervour, and filled with quite a new grace: O my Son, O my God, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word.*

## STATION II.

## THE GUEST-ROOM.

*They went forth (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. And now all has been properly arranged, and they are gathered in the large Guest-Room around their Divine Master, ready to go forth to Gethsemani.

It is night; but the bright, full moon that is lighting up Mount Sion and Mount Moriah and Mount Olivet and Mount Calvary is, oh, how deceptive! It gives no sign or token or warning by which men may know that the dark hour of danger and dread struggle is come.

*Man shall go forth to his work and his labour until the evening.* Our Blessed Lord has ended His working day. He has worked, teaching and healing and doing good, till the late evening.

B. Now *Thou hast appointed darkness and it is night: in it shall the beasts of the wood go about.* The spirits of darkness with the prince of this world at their head are now abroad and at their work. For a little hour they were coerced, and there was around the holy altar a great tranquillity. That hour of peace and privilege is past.

Unseen, the jealous and malignant spirits, who through envy worked the ruin of Adam and Eve, have now their malicious eyes fixed on these fishermen raised suddenly to an elevation immeasurably beyond that of man in Paradise. This presence of the wicked spirits is soon felt.

## STATION III.

*There was also a strife amongst them which of them should seem to be the greater (St. Luke xxii. 24).*

A. What, so soon after the Holy Mysteries! so soon after First Communion! so soon after being raised to the priesthood!

Pious persons are often greatly inclined to despond if immediately after a retreat made fervently, or after Holy Communion, they are surprised into an outburst of

temper, or some other similar fault. They are inclined to jump at once to the conclusion that the retreat and their devotion was all a delusion; but our good God may judge far otherwise. *With what circumspection*, O Lord, *hast Thou judged Thy own children*! (Wisdom xii.). He looks carefully round about (this is *circumspection*) to find all excuses or palliating circumstances before He judges. Moreover, He never fails to take into account all the malignant envy of the tempter who labours so hard to dupe us and seduce us into sin. We are then to keep in mind the teaching of spiritual masters on this subject.

1. As there are acceptable times, and days of special grace and salvation, so there are times of special temptation when the practice of virtue is much more difficult. There are pleasant months in summer and autumn when it is more easy to keep good health; so are there also the cold and raw and bleak and dreary days of winter when it is very easy to become ill and sometimes very hard to keep well.

Within the soul there are similar changes of weather, which are not under our control. There is the time of *Consolation* and the time of *Desolation*. Of these two spiritual states St. Ignatius has treated very fully and very accurately in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

2. From the comparison just used certain conclusions can be drawn.

(a) It follows that, if Consolation is like sunny weather, and Desolation like dark winter, these two states of soul come by *God's ordinance*, and we cannot by our efforts secure sunshine for our souls, nor can we by willing it hinder Desolation from visiting us.

(b) It follows also that we are not necessarily more holy, because our soul is in the sunlight of Consolation, nor less pleasing to God because in dark Desolation. It requires an effort of our faith to believe firmly this most important truth. For we are ever apt to think that any suffering that comes is a proof of God's displeasure, and that things agreeable are marks of His special favour.

(c) A prodigal who comes back to His Father in Heaven has sometimes a larger measure of Consolation to help him in the weakness of his new beginnings. On the other hand, brave and faithful soldiers of Christ are sometimes more tried by Desolation, in order that they may gain greater victories over Satan.

3. St. Ignatius mentions, in detail, some of the principal effects of spiritual Consolation.

(a) It awakens internal emotions whereby the soul begins to be inflamed with love for its Creator and Lord: so that it can no longer love the things of this earth merely for their own sake, but only as means for arriving at its Creator.

(b) It moves to tears, which help the soul towards love for our Lord, tears of contrition for sin, tears of compassion for the sufferings of Christ, or tears caused by any other consideration connected with God's service and glory.

(c) Another effect of spiritual Consolation, not always so sensible, that is, not always accompanied by pleasant feelings, is an increase of faith, hope, and charity. Magdalen at the Cross may have had a great increase of faith and love and yet no pleasant feelings, but on the contrary much pain and agony of heart. Such strong compassion, though so painful, comes under St. Ignatius' idea of Consolation.

4. *Desolation*, he goes on to say, is the opposite to *Consolation*. If *Consolation* is a sunshine from Heaven, *Desolation* may be compared to Egyptian darkness, which the spirits of evil are permitted to spread over the soul.

Like the Egyptian darkness, it is not mere darkness, but, we may say, a poisoned darkness, that seems to affect the will as well as the understanding.

The Egyptian darkness is described in the Book of Wisdom (c. xii.) as a night which came up from the lowest and deepest Hell. *A heavy night, an image of the darkness that was to come.*

So St. Ignatius tells us—and he knew it from his own bitter experience—that with *Desolation* comes a darkening of the soul, trouble in the soul, a drawing to things low and earthly: an unquiet state of agitation and temptation, tending to weaken confidence, so that the soul feels itself to be without hope, without love, and altogether sluggish, lukewarm, and sad, and apparently separated from its Creator and Lord.

5. When we are in this state, our spiritual guides tell us, we must not give up our prayer or spiritual exercises—*Make not haste in the time of clouds* (Ecclesi. ii.); but we naturally answer: "But prayer is now impossible." We require to be strongly assured that God has not abandoned us, nor withdrawn all grace—that we can still pray; and that prayer made now—because more difficult—is much more powerful than prayer in time of sunshine.

6. St. Ignatius adds that God permits *Desolation*.

(i.) Sometimes to waken us out of a state of spiritual sluggishness.

(ii.) Sometimes in order to give us opportunity of winning more future glory by fighting here bravely without present *Consolation*.

(iii.) Sometimes to make us know experimentally that it is not in our power to command, whenever we will, pious and devotional feelings and tears, and to prevent us from "building our nest in another man's tree"—that is to say, ascribing to ourselves what is a pure effect of God's compassion for our weakness.

7. St. Ignatius strongly advises those suffering *Desolation* not to fight their battle alone, but to seek counsel from some spiritual guide. The devil is a seducer who trusts entirely to fraud, and dreads nothing so much as exposure to the light.

8. Priests and others who have to guide souls might be unsafe guides if they had not themselves in *Desolation* become acquainted with infirmity.

Pious lay people also, if not occasionally schooled by *Desolation*, might be inclined at times to turn Reformers, and undertake the work of Eccumenical Councils.

B. Our great High Priest, then, Jesus the Son of God, Who is going to allow Himself to taste all the bitterness of *Desolation*, and to be compassed with infirmity, knows how to have compassion on His disciples when they are ignorant and err. He does not with one rough word crush them for so soon coming down from the high thoughts He has been pouring into their souls: but with great meekness and charity teaches them and teaches us.

#### STATION IV.

And He said to them: The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so. But he that is the greater among you let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth (vv. 25—27).

A. The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them.

What more appalling, what more calculated to freeze the blood than the records of the abject servility exacted by despots: "*Moriuri te salubant, Cæsar*". "We, the doomed ones, the men about to be butchered to make a holiday for you, we come to bow down before your throne, and wish you prosperity, before we go to death." And, what is passing strange, the men who will not stoop to serve their good God, are the most ready to grovel in the dust before a man in power.

When the people of Israel, tired of theocracy, clamoured for a king, God said to His servant Samuel, who was then the judge in Israel: *They have not rejected thee, but Me, that I should reign over them. Now therefore hearken to their voice, but yet testify to them and foretell them the right of the king that shall reign over them. He will take your sons and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen and his running footmen to run before his chariots. Your daughters he will take to make him ornaments and to be his cooks and bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your best olive-yards, and give them to his servants.*

The answer of the foolish people was: *Nay, but there shall be a king over us* (1 Kings viii.).

B. *They that have power shall be called beneficent.*

Lord Chancellor Audrey, the unworthy successor of Blessed Sir Thomas More, used to shed tears while haranguing the Parliament on the virtues and heavenly qualities of their gracious Sovereign Henry VIII.

C. *But you not so. But he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger.* Men say sometimes that Christianity is a failure. Because we are grown familiar with the wonders wrought by Christianity, as we are with the sunlight, we think less of them. Has nothing been effected when the greatest potentate on earth, the Vicar of Christ, glories in being called, *Servus Servorum Dei*?

With what jealous care have the founders of Religious Orders provided that neither high offices, nor age, nor past services shall be a pretext for lording it over others, or a title to flattery and adulation! Has Christianity taught us nothing?

D. *I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.*

Lucifer's defiant motto is, *I will not serve.*

Man, too, created to serve His Creator, refused to serve. Neither fear of Hell nor hope of Heaven could move his pride to bow down. Then said the Son of God, *Behold,*

*I come. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, as one that serveth. And multitudes of Christian men and women follow after Him, led on by the charm of His meek and humble Heart.*

#### STATION V.

*And you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a Kingdom; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (vv. 28—30).

A. *You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations.*

What! instead of severely reprimanding their ambitious strife!

St. Paul well understood the Heart of his Master when he wrote: *Charity doth not think evil.* Our Lord will not observe the present fault, but looks back, from the present, to all their past fidelity.

“Most merciful Lord Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, teach us to be blind to the evil that men may do to us, and only to remember their kindness.”

How very far astray we have gone when we actually see evil that does not exist, and accuse men rashly and wrongfully!

B. *I dispose to you a Kingdom.*

Our Lord knows how the unseen spirits are plotting ruin against the souls of His little flock, but His charitable meekness baffles their plot. He safely protects the hearts of His disciples against earthly ambition. *I dispose to you a Kingdom.* Even as My Father is preparing a Kingdom for Me, I am preparing thrones for you. You need not be troubled about precedence. You are all to sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

C. We too must learn this good method of weaning men's souls from earthly things, by putting vividly before them better things—the beauty of the Lord, and the goodness and the joys of life everlasting with Him.

## STATION VI.

*And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren (vv. 31, 32).*

A. *Satan hath desired to have you.*

And now our Lord reveals something to them, concerning their own position, beyond what their eyes can see, but which He sees most clearly; how Satan and the wicked spirits of darkness are at this very moment glaring on them with their malicious, murderous eyes, and longing to destroy them. As St. Peter afterwards wrote: 'They are seeking whom they may devour' (1 St. Peter v.). They are only restrained by that watchful Providence which takes far more care of each child of Heaven than of the birds and the lilies, and does not allow the tempter ever to afflict any beyond their power of enduring. Satan had to ask permission each time he exerted his malice against Job; and each time God decreed how far the tide of troubles might roll, and no farther.

B. Observe; Satan has desired to have you, all the Apostles. I have prayed for thee. This special prayer is for His future Vicar, who is to be allowed to fall through weakness, that his presumption may be for ever cured; but his faith is not to fail.

## STATION VII.

*Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalised in Me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed (St. Matt. xxvi. 31).*

A. *All you shall be scandalised in Me this night.*

If we should chance to hear that a priest just ordained had committed some great crime, we might be inclined to despair of God's religion.

At what period in the history of the Church was the

look-out more dark than on this Holy Thursday night? All His newly-ordained priests, His own chosen ones, trained so assiduously by Himself, His Bishops, His Apostles elect, His own Vicar, all shall be scandalised.

But *charity hopeth all things*, when those who love not have lost all hope. Our Blessed Saviour in time past told His disciples how He saw Lucifer through pride fall from Heaven like lightning. He knows that pride also ruined all His first plan for man in Paradise. *You shall be as gods*, was the promise that allured the first man and woman away from fidelity.

The one thing therefore that He now dreads for His new creation is pride. He is not dismayed or cast down at the sight of weakness in His disciples, because He well knows that virtue is perfected in infirmity (2 Cor. xii.). His Heart *hopeth all things, endureth all things, beareth all things*.

He pleads, in favour of His little ones, the terrible fierceness of the assault upon them; and that if the shepherd be struck down, it is not wonderful if the flock be scandalised and scattered. He knows that the storm will soon cease to rage, and that then the fire kindled in the Cenaculum, which now seems stamped out and extinguished for ever, will burst forth again from the ashes, and fill the whole world with its bright light.

B. *All you shall be scandalised.*

This word *scandalised* is sometimes misused and misunderstood. In certain districts men say, Such a one is *scandalising me*, when they mean that he is slandering me, and giving me a bad name.

Or again, when men are indignant, or disgusted, or shocked at something that they hear, they sometimes say, *I am scandalised*, whereas, in reality, they are often much more scandalised when they are listening to language that does not shock them, but pleases them.

A scandal then is a stone, or other obstacle, that makes one stumble, or fall. A neighbour scandalises us if he, by

telling us some news, moves us to sin by resentment, or by uncharitable judgments, or by thoughts against the angelical virtue. If we were shocked and indignant at hearing such words, we should be less scandalised. We are scandalised because we are not shocked, but listen with pleasure, and either commit a sin, or give up some good which we were going to do.

#### STATION VIII.

*But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee (v. 32).*

St. Ignatius advises us to cheer ourselves, and others also, during the dark hours of Desolation, by calling to mind that sunshine will soon come back if we keep up our courage, and fight manfully.

*Resist the devil and he will fly from you*, is a truth to be treasured up for the time of trial. We see in the words we are considering how our Saviour, knowing what a dark hour is at hand, reminds His little flock that a better time is soon to follow. *After I shall be risen, I will go before you into Galilee.*

#### STATION IX.

*And Peter answering, said to Him : Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, yet not I ; I will never be scandalised. Lord, I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Mark xiv. ; St. Luke xxii.).*

A. The hour of great temptation is clearly come. Our Saviour has just warned St. Peter that Lucifer and his legions of wicked spirits are waiting and watching to see if they may find a chance of sifting His little flock as wheat—that is to say, of trying their fidelity with all manner of temptation, in the hope that they may prove to be only chaff, and not good wheat. *He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God. Let us see then if his words be true ; and let us prove what shall happen to him ; and we shall know what his end shall be. Let us examine him by outrages and*

*tortures (Wisdom ii.).* Here we have the mind of Lucifer ; his malicious desire to outrage God and His Christ by ruining their work, their image. To destroy fidelity and love in the souls of these chosen disciples would be a triumph beyond price to him.

But the wicked spirits are in presence of their Lord and Master, at Whose Name every knee must bend in Hell, as well as on earth and in Heaven. Their power for mischief is restrained. Later on, when the Sacred Passion has borne its fruits in the souls of these chosen ones, Satan will be permitted to try his strength and his cunning against them, that the victory of these fishers of men may cover the powers of darkness with unbearable confusion. But now, in their weakness, our Blessed Saviour will not permit temptation beyond their strength.

B. And yet, even so the tempter gains some way. St. Ignatius, well-tried in warfare against the wiles of Satan, tells us that the wicked spirits study each individual, just as a besieging general studies the beleaguered town to find out the weak points.

Satan has therefore carefully studied the man who is hereafter to become his chief enemy on earth, the Vicar of Christ, the Prince of His Apostles, and Father of all the faithful. He has found out that Simon Peter's ardent nature which helps him towards great love, on the other hand favours self-reliance and presumption and obstinacy of mind. But Satan's cunning is short-sighted. Did he but know how the charity of Christ will out of Peter's fall work peace on earth and glory to God, he would be loath indeed to tempt him. The Blessed Apostle had ever before his mind in after years the lessons of this, sad and sacred night. Therefore did he write to the flock of Christ those wholesome counsels : *Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God. Be sober, and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour (1 St. Peter v.).*

C. That the temptation from Lucifer is violent appears

from this, that our Lord had already, before the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, warned Simon Peter that he would fall that night, and that warning must have had good effect, since later on, after the Holy Communion, Jesus said : *You are clean, because of the word I have spoken to you.* Notwithstanding this, he now repeats his fault with aggravation ; he not only declares that he will never be scandalised, but he prefers himself before the rest, and protests : *Although all be scandalised in Thee, yet not I.*

Let us note, however, that this sin of St. Peter's is one which presupposes love for Christ Jesus. If there were not love in his heart for his Master, he never would imagine that he would die for Him. For such sins the charitable Heart of our Saviour can find excuses much more easily than for those which are all made up of selfishness and pride and sensuality, without any admixture of love.

And yet even when we fall into these blacker sins, the disciple who leaned his head on the Sacred Heart of Jesus tells us to remember that *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.*

"If this be so, Lord Jesus, if Thou canst plead for us when our sins are as red as scarlet, till they are made white as snow, *with what circumspection*, with how much tender compassion and consideration and remembrance of all Thy past love wilt Thou deal with Thy own Apostle !"

#### STATION X.

*And Jesus saith to him : Amen, I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice (St. Mark xiv.). The cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest Me (St. Luke xxii.).*

*In this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*But he spoke the more vehemently : Although I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee (St. Mark xiv.).*

St. Mark enables us to interpret St. Matthew and St. Luke.

He writes : *before the cock crow twice.* That is, before the second crowing of the cock, which will take place at some interval after the first.

St. Matthew and St. Luke are in accord with this, if we interpret them to mean that St. Peter will deny three times before the crowing of the cock be completed.

A. *Speaking as one that hath power*, our Lord foretells accurately the day, the hour, and the circumstances of the denial ; but Peter, carried away by the strong consciousness within him that he loves his Master, forgets that his Master is a prophet, and much more than a prophet ; forgets too his own profession, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*, and treats the loving admonition with irreverence.

With reason the Holy Spirit gives us all this most friendly counsel : *In whatever day you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.* Because the voice of the Lord does not come to us as a *whirlwind*, or an *earthquake*, or a *fire*, but as the whisper of a *gentle breeze*, we often give no heed to it ; and yet any word of His can do what all the tongues of angels and men joined together could not effect. Every word of His, though it seems to be but a little seed, yet out of it can grow a universe, and a Heaven, and life everlasting. What a loss, what a calamity, what an inconceivable folly and recklessness it is when such a word—a word from the mouth of our good God, our wise God, our Almighty God—is rejected, and, as far as in us lies, made void !

#### STATION XI.

*And in like manner said all the disciples (St. Matt. xxvi. 35).*

A. *All we like sheep have gone astray.* Like sheep, without reflection, we follow a leader. On the day of Samson's death, THE PRINCES OF THE PHILISTINES were making merry, and offering great sacrifices to Dagon their god, and saying, *Our god hath delivered our enemy Samson into our hands.* And the people seeing this, praised their god and said the same (Judges xiv.).

When the Wise Men brought the news that a King was born, *Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

We who are so proud, so fond of independence, so unwilling to be subject to our God, yet are most ready to give ourselves blindly to the leadership of a man. Nay, we are not content till we have a man as our leader. *Give us a king; we clamour with the Jews when they were tired of having God as their King and their Lawgiver. And the Lord answers most unwillingly, I will give them a king in My wrath.* And we, the children of God, become the slaves of a man, and of Lucifer.

B. Observe how Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, is silent, and does not harshly or even severely rebuke the irreverent reply of His disciples to His salutary warning. His Heart prays in great compassion for them, but He speaks not. *There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak (Eccles. iii.).*

## STATION XII.

*And He said to them: When I sent you without scrip and purse and shoes, did you want anything? But they said, Nothing. Then said He to them, But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me: And with the wicked was He reckoned. For the things concerning Me have an end (St. Luke xxii. 35—37).*

A. *Now he that hath a purse let him take it.*

He is now giving them to understand that the hour of turmoil and confusion is come; an exceptional time of danger and persecution, during which ordinary rules will be in abeyance. "Formerly, I sent you without scrip, and you never were destitute; you could live on alms. But when Satan is for a while let loose, *Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth a service to God* (St. John xvi.). Persecution will so rage that unless the evil days had

*been shortened no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.). But the ever-watching providence of our Father will shorten these days of tribulation *for the sake of the elect.*"

In these days, then, of persecution our Lord forewarns His disciples, you will no longer be able to go about welcomed because you are My disciples. According to human wisdom, you will want scrip and purse, and a sword also.

In the history of the Church, we see these prophetic words fully verified. For in the days of persecution the Apostles of Christ have been obliged to be *prudent as serpents* as well as *simple as doves*. Like the great St. Athanasius, they have followed their Divine Master's counsel, *When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.*

At the same time, while taking wise precautions, He will have them not fear *them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul* (St. Matt. x.). For now, as always, their Father in Heaven knows what their need is; and they are to Him much more precious than the birds of the air, which He never forgets.

B. *But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise a scrip.*

From our Lord's own practice with His disciples, we see that there are times when His Apostles are to lay aside these precautions of human wisdom, and go without scrip; and, what is more wonderful, not to premeditate what they are to say before kings and princes; but trust to the Divine promise that it will be given them what they are to say.

At other times He and His Apostles and His Religious Orders have purse and scrip. Judas was the unfaithful keeper of our Lord's purse. *He having the purse, carried the things that were put therein* (St. John xii.).

And His disciples who shall go over the world till the end of time to preach the Gospel, though in exceptional times they can trust, and must trust, that the Spirit of God will give them what they are to say, yet, as the ordinary rule, they will be bound to use all industry and



diligence that they may teach aright the Gospel of Christ, and not their own conceits.

C. *Let him sell his coat and buy a sword.*

These words of our Saviour have to be reconciled with what He says later in the same night to St. Peter: *He who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.* "Why, O Lord," St. Ambrose writes, "dost Thou bid me bring a sword, and forbid me to strike?"

His solution is that it might be wise to let assailants see that we have the means of punishing enemies, though we do not wish to make use of our power.

Other commentators understand our Lord to wish to convey to His Apostles, that the danger at hand is so great that men of human prudence would say that a sword would be more necessary even than ordinary meat and drink. We have already seen how oftentimes He uses words that are misunderstood, and speaks parables and proverbs which are not to be interpreted rashly, but with care and circumspection and humility. He *giveth understanding to little ones* (Psalm cxviii.), but the proud He *hath scattered in the conceit of their heart* (St. Luke i.).

He follows throughout His teaching His Heavenly Father's plan: *Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones* (St. Matt. xii.). The little ones who are humble can always, through the light of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of Holy Church, arrive at the true sense of our Lord's words: but the rich—those who are too much content with their own intellect—*He hath sent empty away.*

D. *For the things concerning Me have an end.*

The disciples little think how rapidly that end is coming. We too must learn to say the same words concerning ourselves: *The things concerning me have an end.*

Even if we live to be old, the end commonly seems to come suddenly, and before it was expected.

E. The saints taught themselves to reckon little of things that *have an end*, and to keep their esteem for things everlasting.

F. As the present life is soon to have an end, wisely indeed does St. Paul advise us: *It is now the hour to rise from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we (first) believed* (Romans xiii.).

And again: *See therefore, brethren, now you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time* (Ephes. v.).

How can time be redeemed? If a man is making for a train, and falls down and thus loses some time, he tries hard to regain what is lost by walking or running more quickly than he would otherwise have done. In the Collect for the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, we are taught to redeem time by working very diligently. The young saints who in few years reached to great holiness, condemn the long lives of the remiss and the slothful (Wisdom iv.).

### STATION XIII.

*But they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And He said to them, It is enough* (v. 38).

Some commentators think that they were two large sacrificial knives used in the immolation of the lamb. Others maintain that they were swords.

A. *He said to them, It is enough.*

Our Blessed Saviour knows all that is to happen to Malchus, and sees good reasons for allowing Peter and the rest to remain in their error about the sword.

Azarias was walking in the midst of the flaming furnace when he said the words which we too must say in gladness:

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord; all Thy works are true, and Thy ways right, and all Thy judgments true.*

"Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. He is well known to thee, and beloved by thy whole heart. Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Show us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus, that we may love Him with some share of thy love."

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SECOND NIGHT WATCH.

## SCENE I.

## THE WAY TO GETHSEMANI.

*And going out He went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples followed Him (St. Luke xxii.). When Jesus had said these things He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples (St. John xviii.).*

Some holy and learned interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures seem to say that the strife among the Apostles, which we have been considering, and the prophetic warnings which our Saviour uttered so solemnly of the dangers that were to come that night, were incidents which occurred during the walk from the Coenaculum to Gethsemani; but we are perhaps justified in following the order which we find in St. Luke's narrative. For it is after he has recorded the conversation which arose out of the strife, and how our Lord then foretold the scandals to come, that he writes the words: *Going out He went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives.*

## STATION I.

*A. He went forth with His disciples.*

If the common tradition be correct, we are at the night of the 24th of March, according to our modern calendar. And, as far as we can calculate or conjecture, it is about nine o'clock, that is, about the beginning of the second night watch, when Jesus leaves the Coenaculum. In the Jewish calendar we know that it is the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, which shall be to you the beginning of

## LEGEND FOR THE ILLUSTRATION

### MOUNT OLIVET (West Side) AND GETHSEMANE

- A. Tomb of the Blessed Virgin
- B. Entrance to the Grotto of the Agony
- C. High Road from Jerusalem to Bethany
- D. Cedron Torrent
- E. Place Where Our Lord Was Seized
- F. Stone Where Three Apostles Slept and Where  
Judas Kissed Jesus
- G. Place Where Jesus Wept
- H. Where He Taught the Pater Noster
- I. Place of the Ascension
- J. Where the Eight Apostles Were Left
- K. Garden of Gethsemane



MOUNT OLIVET (WEST SIDE) AND GETHSEMANE.

months. *It shall be the first in the months of the year* (Exodus xii.).

At this season in Jerusalem, a chill evening and a cold night succeed to the warmth and bright sunshine of the mid-day. The full moon is shedding its tranquil light on Mount Sion, Mount Olivet, Mount Moriah, and Mount Calvary; names which before to-morrow's sunset will be graven in characters of heavenly light never to be effaced, and set as a seal on the heart of the Bride of Christ, His Holy Church, and as a seal upon her arm.

This still moonlight, we have seen, is most deceptive. It suggests nothing but peace and repose, and gives no sign or indication whatsoever that the greatest, the fiercest, the most stupendous death-struggle that shall ever be decided in this world is about to begin; we may say is begun.

Lucifer was not only infuriated with envy and malice against God's new creation when he assailed the first man and woman in Paradise; but he and the rest of the fallen angels, moreover, looked upon Adam and Eve with unspeakable scorn and contempt, because they were beings of a lower grade, and made out of the slime of the earth. It was in order to confound and scatter these proud spirits in the conceit of their hearts that the Lord God decreed that they were to be conquered and crushed this time not by their faithful compeers, Michael, and Gabriel, and the rest, but by a Man and a Woman of the race that they condemned so much.

*Duello confixere mirando.* Death and life, light and darkness, are to meet in a contest that the blessed angels shall gaze upon with silent amazement. Now therefore the second Adam and the second Eve are ready, and the fight is commencing.

*B. Going out He went, and His disciples followed Him.*

The fight, we may say, is commencing, because now, apparently, our Saviour, Who has been pouring out His Heart so abundantly in farewell words of comfort and of love, walks in deep silence, and His disciples follow Him.

In the Cenacle He promised: *I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Comforter.*

*Another Comforter*, He said, because till now He has been their Comforter above measure. But now the Comforter shall want comfort, and sore shall be His need.

Let us in spirit follow our Lord, watching carefully, listening attentively—and trying reverently to read His thoughts.

*Antima Christi, sanctifica me.*

The Cenacle, as we have seen, stands in the south-west corner of the city. Gethsemani, the *country place or farm in which there was a garden*, lies due east of the city and north-east of the Cenacle. The brook of Cedron, dry in the summer months, and a torrent in the rainy season, flows down the narrow valley of Josaphat, between the eastern wall of the Holy City and Mount Olivet. Midway between the southern and northern extremity of this eastern wall, at the base of Mount Olivet and close to the high-road which skirted the torrent Cedron, lies the *country place which is called Gethsemani*. As we are told, there are eight gardens there, and one of them belongs to the Blessed Virgin. The sepulchre of her parents stood then where now the church stands, which, like many other sacred sanctuaries, has been wrested from the Catholics and is held by Schismatic Armenians.

C. Silently then Jesus is walking eastward through the quiet streets. His path lies close to the Palace of the Priests, but He knows that He is secure, because His hour is not yet come. From Mount Sion He descends by steps into the lower quarter called Ophel, where the poor are gathered; and thence, through a gate in the south-eastern angle, He leaves the city, for the last time as a free man. The next time that He passes through the gates another shall lead Him as a prisoner.

As soon as He goes out of the city, He at once descends the steep pathway that leads to the little bridge over the Cedron. After to-night the pathway shall have a new name. In times to come it is to be known as the road of the Captivity. Jesus, the Son of David, and the most obedient and loving Son of the Eternal Father, is now walking in silence and in sorrow past the spot where, even as late as the sixteenth century, passers-by were wont to

cast one stone more on the heap near the so-called monument of Absalom, saying as they moved on: "Accursed Absalom the Parricide! Accursed they who wickedly persecute their parents!" Jesus has now passed that tomb, and is bending His steps northward under the high walls of the city, when at a distance of about one hundred and fifty yards from the Garden, and not far from the brook Cedron, He halts and breaks the silence.

## STATION II.

*He said to His disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray* (St. Matt. xxvi. 36).

From what follows we see that this word was not addressed to all, but only to eight of the eleven who were with Him. There is no memorial chapel standing on the spot, but the site is pointed out, and the plot of land adjoining has been secured, in the hope that a sanctuary may be there erected.

A. *Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray.*

Contemplate the thoughtful and compassionate care of our Saviour for His disciples. He knows that their weakness could not bear the sight of His infirmity: they would be overmuch scandalised and shaken. Despite His own trouble, He is full of solicitude for them.

"*Attendite.*" This we must not fail to note; for sorrow easily demoralises us, and renders selfishness more intense and quite deadens sympathy for others.

B. Nay, at times, sorrow when very great hurries men into hopeless despair. Hence St. Paul directs that the chastisement of the scandalous sinner at Corinth shall not be prolonged unduly. *To him that is such a one this rebuke is sufficient that is given by many. So that contrariwise you should rather pardon and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow* (2 Cor. ii.). Overmuch sorrow easily destroys hope, and brings in despair, which blights and kills all the virtues. Hence it is that our Blessed Saviour not only gave to Holy Church the power of forgiving sins, but added on a most necessary

kindred power of remitting by Indulgences, wholly or in part, the temporal punishment which so often remains due to sin after the guilt has been forgiven. In His infinite charity He extends to us the full benefit of our communion with the saints, He allows His own superabundant atonement, and the unspeakable sufferings of His Blessed Mother, and the blood of the martyrs, and the penances of saintly monks and hermits and innocent virgins to be used in payment of our debts; and Holy Church requires us to believe that this merciful arrangement is most wholesome and salutary for Christian people. Surely so, since it removes that great danger of our being swallowed up by overmuch sorrow and depression, if we had to pay unaided and alone the vast debt which often remains due after a valid absolution has taken away the guilt of sin. Purgatory too, where we can do penance without incurring fresh guilt and without despairing, is another invention of the charity of our Father in Heaven and His beloved Son, our Saviour.

In this holy hour, however, we see that sorrow cannot conquer either hope, or love, or compassion in the Heart of Jesus. *Many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it* (Cant. viii.).

C. *And Thou hast taught Thy people, O Lord, by such words that they must be just and humane* (Wisdom xii.). Good Christian parents and Superiors learn from the charity of our Saviour not to prolong punishment unduly, nor to remember too long offences once punished, lest overmuch sorrow swallow up the offender committed to their care.

### STATION III.

*And He taketh Peter and James and John with Him*  
(St. Mark xiv. 33).

A. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are cousins of our Saviour, but flesh and blood can be of little help now. They have, however, better gifts than the ties of kin. They, with Peter, were on Mount Thabor, and their

faith was there strengthened, so that they can better bear the spectacle of their Master's great prostration. It is believed also that on these three He conferred in the Cenacle the fulness of sacerdotal power and grace by consecrating them as Bishops.

It is not then a chastisement, but a great privilege and an earnest of signal graces to come, when our Saviour chooses any of His disciples to be with Him in sorrow.

Even if we have not strength to drink the bitter chalice with Him, yet if we even watch with Him in His sorrow and listen to His sighs, He is most grateful, and virtue will surely come out from Him and grow in us.

B. *And He taketh Peter and James and John with Him.*

As with these three companions He walks slowly northward under the eastern wall of the city high above Him, He well understands, though His disciples do not, what is the meaning of the unusual sounds of life that come to-night from the area of the Temple and the barracks of the Roman Guard beyond. Ordinarily, Jerusalem is still after nightfall. For on this point, at least, God's ordinance prevails: *The sun ariseth, and man shall go forth to his work and to his labour until the evening. Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night, in it shall all the beasts of the woods go about* (Psalm ciii.). On this exceptional night, however, men who have become like to senseless beasts are desecrating and profaning the sacred stillness of the dark hours. His Prophet was speaking as our Lord's mouthpiece when he said: *Tribulation is very near—for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against Me. They have spoken against Me with deceitful tongues, and they have compassed Me about with words of hatred, and have fought against Me without cause* (Psalm cviii.). Within His meek and humble Heart our Lord is saying: *My people, what have I done to thee? In what have I molested thee?*

C. *He taketh Peter and James and John with Him.*

He is now close to the country place, the farm called

*Getsemani.* He is on the spot where five days ago He was seated on the ass's colt, and listening to the loud *Hosanna to the Son of David*, and *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*. That was His brief hour of consolation. Now the dark hour of desolation is settling on His soul. The change is no surprise to Him. *My Heart hath expected reproach and misery* (Psaln lxxviii.).

## SCENE II.

## THE GARDEN OF GETSEMANI.

## STATION I.

*There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples* (St. John xviii. 1).

A. He has reached the battlefield which He Himself has chosen. It was in the garden given by God to the first Adam and the first Eve that Lucifer won his terrible victory. Of set purpose Jesus Christ, the second Adam, has bent His steps to this modest Garden of Gethsemani, which is the possession of His Blessed Mother, the second Eve. It is here that He has planned to begin the second conflict which is to make good all that was lost in the garden of man's ruin. Being Himself made after the form of the first Adam, He has planned that the Redemption also shall be worked on the same lines as the Fall. In a garden, therefore, His Passion shall begin; and when all is consummated, in a garden close beside the Cross His Sacred Body shall be laid.

B. *There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples.*

To His legions of blessed angels, Jesus has now signified that Lucifer and the powers of darkness have permission to approach Him, and put forth their strength against Him, as far as the decree of His Eternal Father allows. The spirits of evil need no urging. Long have they wistfully watched this weary and emaciated and exhausted Man. They know the preparations which under

their guidance are in progress against Him—within bow-shot, inside the Temple area and the Roman Prætorium. But what they do not know is that they are entering into an insane conflict, ruinous to their kingdom; a conflict with their God, Who saw them *fall like lightning out of Heaven*.

That He is a Just Man, and a Prophet, and the Messias, and the Christ, they have found out. That much well they know; but that He is the Word made Flesh they do not know. The secret of His conception in the womb of His Virgin Mother has been carefully hidden from them. And, therefore, believing that they are going to struggle with one who, however holy, is not more than a mortal man, they are bold and daring and hopeful, and put forth all their energy and exert all their intellect to work His overthrow.

## STATION II.

*There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples* (St. John xviii.). And He began to fear and to be heavy (St. Mark xiv.). He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad (St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. *He began to fear and to be heavy—to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

This is the evidence that Jesus, to Whom all power is given, has Himself given the signal that the conflict may be commenced. For till He says the word, and gives permission, *There shall no evil come to Thee, O Lord. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day* (Psaln xc.). *The sun shall not burn Thee by day, nor the moon by night* (Psaln cxx.). For where else, if not in Thy Most Sacred Heart, is that secure *Tabernacle of God with men*, that Heaven, where death has no power to come, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow? (Apoc. xxi.).

B. *He began to fear and to be heavy—to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

Doubtless it was from the three chosen witnesses that



the Evangelists afterwards learned what they wrote down for us. St. Peter remembered and told St. Mark how their loved Master in that hour *began to fear and to be heavy*; others repeated to St. Matthew that He *began to grow sorrowful and to be sad*. They only told what their eyes had seen and their ears heard.

For in the moonlight they can see how the paleness of death has overspread His sacred face; and that a look of inexpressible distress and anguish has quite disfigured the beauty of His countenance. "We saw Him," they would afterwards tell, "we saw Him, and there was no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: no, nor even sightliness. We were dismayed and horror-stricken and scandalised; for we heard Him sobbing as if His Heart would break, and saw His tears falling fast, and all His strength apparently gone from His wasted Body, for His footsteps were faltering, and His limbs all trembled; and we were sore afraid that we were going to see Him sink down on the sward never to rise again, when He turned to speak to us with His choked and broken voice."

### STATION III.

*And He saith to them: My Soul is sorrowful even unto death*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 38).

A. Here, for the first time, they have the explanation of His deep silence since He left the Cenacle. We must bear in mind that our guides and masters in the study of the Sacred Passion remind us that we are not to pass these words by as if they are only a figure of speech. They understand them to be an exact account of what is going on within our Blessed Lord. It may probably be that permission is given to Satan to spread over His Sacred Soul that *heavy night* of desolation which comes up from the *lowest and deepest Hell* (Wisdom xviii.). Or else the natural power of fear and sadness and heaviness of heart are now permitted to work upon Him to the fullest extent.

However this may be, we must accept the words in their strict sense, and believe that He is enduring, in its most aggravated form, all the anguish and distress which sometimes oppresses the dying, when the great agony sets in and the soul must perforce go forth from the body. He alone among men, a holy writer observes, without dying endured all the bitterness of death. So much so, that had it not been already decreed that Jesus shall not die here, but on Calvary at the ninth hour, there is certainly in this hour enough of sorrow and anguish at work within His breast to cause the *silver cord* of life to snap, and the *golden fillet* of health and beauty to *shrink back* for ever; and the *pitcher* that holds His life-blood to be *crushed at the fountain*; and the *wheel* of His Nativity to be *broken upon the cistern* and stopped short in its course (Eccles. xii.).

"O Jesus, sorrowful for me unto death, penetrate my soul with the truth of Thy word: *Blessed are they that mourn with Thee.*"

### STATION IV.

*And He saith to them: My Soul is sorrowful even unto death. Stay you here and watch with Me* (St. Matt. xxvi.).  
*And when He was come to the place, He said: Pray, lest you enter into temptation* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. He said: *Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

We must notice how sorrow and sadness and fear in all their intensity can never turn our Lord's Soul one hair's breadth from perfect love. In the prophetic description of this night watch He says to us: *The waters have come in even to My Soul. I am come into the depths of the sea: and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psaln lxxviii.).

Now we are constantly reminded in the chronicles of this world, that when men are to such an extent worked upon by great fear and sadness that they commit suicide or some other great crime, they are commonly held by

their fellow-men to be comparatively blameless, because, so it is said, they were labouring under temporary insanity. The Holy Spirit also describes fear as *nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought*. These words mean that fear so paralyzes the soul that it can no longer help itself with reasoning. All these paroxysms, however, of fear and sadness which are supposed to madden, are not like the load that is in this hour oppressing our Saviour's Soul. He can safely say to all of us who contemplate Him: *Stay a little while, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow* (Lament i.).

B. Yes, sorrow and fear are doing all that they can do; but still He can with all His Heart and all His thought take care of His disciples.

His sorrow is a sorrow unto death. It is a sorrow strong enough to break His Heart and cause death. But it is not a sorrow that can conquer His charity, which is *strong as death*, and stronger. *The waters have come in even unto (His) Soul*. True; but as His Holy Spirit has told us: *Many waters cannot quench charity: neither can the floods drown it*. To Him, more than to all others, His Eternal Father has *given a commandment concerning His neighbours*. And in the beginning of the Book it is written that He will do most perfectly this will of His Father, as every other. Never for one moment can He think of *saving His own Soul only* (Esther iv.) from sorrow and anguish. On the contrary, the one sole cause why He is in this extremity of anguish is because *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*.

C. When the winds and the waves were raging on the lake in Galilee, one word from Him commanded them all. So it is now. The passion of fear is strong; sadness is strong; sorrow is strong; but though these passions rise to their topmost height, they never will conquer the charity in His Heart; the voice of His love will ever be dominant and supreme over them.

D. *He said: Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

He does not tell us to pray not to be tempted. For our life must be a warfare, and we must be soldiers, and must fight a good fight. But oh! how earnestly He desires that when Satan comes to tempt, and so to allure us away from our God, our Lord, our Creator, our loving Father, our most merciful Redeemer, we may not listen to the temptation, or enter into it, or go over to the side of Satan and agree with him, and make ourselves his subjects and his slaves.

E. *Stay you here and watch with Me.*

*Watch with Me.* Keep a vigil with Me; watch as a friend watches by the sick-bed of a suffering friend. Let Me have at least the comfort of knowing that some of those I love are remembering Me in My sorrow. Remember Me, think of Me, for without any fault am I come out from the bosom of My Father and cast into this extremity of sorrow. But even this small solace He does not get. *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none* (Psaln lxxviii.).

F. *Watch with Me.*

It ought not to be hard to watch with our Saviour. To spend the night sleepless and watchful in weary longing for the dawn, and full of anxious thoughts, all this is grievous indeed; but if our Saviour is watching with us and we are watching with Him, surely all is changed.

In the Cenacle He said: *You shall be scattered and shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me*. May we not say words akin to these: "In sorrow I am not alone, because Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, is always with the suffering"? Remain with Me, for I will carry the yoke with you, and so *My yoke will be sweet and My burden light*.

G. *Stay you here and watch with Me.*

They were standing on the slope of Mount Olivet, very near the base, when our Blessed Saviour spoke these words. A bed

of hard smooth rock, about two feet from the ground, is shown as the spot where the three disciples rested. If we are looking at this bed of rock with our backs turned on Jerusalem and our faces to Mount Olivet, the ancient olive trees that are still standing are on our right hand; and the Grotto into which our Lord retired to pray is on the left, and a little behind us. It is somewhat nearer the high-road than the stone is on which the Apostles slept. To reach this Grotto, our Saviour had to descend rather abruptly about thirty or forty feet; but still it was not distant more than a stone's cast from the resting-place of the Apostles. To the entrance of the Grotto there is a descent of about twenty feet, and then from the entrance a flight of twenty-seven steps leads down to the spot where our Saviour prayed. The olive gardens, which gave the Mount its name, have in great measure disappeared. Water was not abundant in Judea. We can see in many places of Holy Writ that a well was a valuable possession. At the present day, the writers of guide-books take care to tell travellers where they are likely to find a good spring of water. The number of cisterns found in and around Jerusalem is quite wonderful. The small number of well-springs throughout the country is scarcely less wonderful. The olive gardens, therefore, planted in terraces, were irrigated by artificial means. As, then, this artificial irrigation has in great measure been abandoned throughout Judea, Mount Olivet and many other hill-sides stand now quite bare of trees. There are very few new plantations to be seen, and, on the other hand, a large number of persons go out of the city every day to dig up even the roots of trees, wherever they can be found, for firewood.

The Mount of Olives, then, stands very bare and rocky. But in an enclosure made by the careful Franciscan Fathers, there are still standing eight ancient olive trees, some of the trunks of which have to be supported by masonry. These trees are believed to have been on the spot on the night of our Lord's Agony, or at least to have sprung out of the ancient trunks. And there is this strong argument in favour of the belief, that from the third century up to now there is a chain of reliable evidence in favour of this tradition. These trees are, as we might expect, held in great veneration by the faithful. To prevent their being destroyed by pilgrims anxious for relics, it was necessary to raise a wall round them; and, moreover, heavy censures have been promulgated by the Holy See against all who attempt to cut or injure them.

The Grotto of the Agony is much wider and somewhat longer than the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem. It measures about forty feet by thirty; and may be twelve or fourteen feet in height. It is, of course, arranged as an Oratory, and the Holy Sacrifice is continually offered there; but the Grotto or cave remains more in its natural state than does the Grotto of Bethlehem. There is not much more than the thickness of a

wall dividing this Grotto from the ancient Sepulchre of our Lady, now changed into a chapel.

One reason, among others, why some paintings of the Agony in the Garden are less satisfactory, is that the painters depart from the tradition, and represent our Saviour as praying, not in a cave or grotto, but in the open air, with nothing above Him but the canopy of heaven.

### SCENE III.

#### THE GROTTTO.

#### STATION I.

*And He was withdrawn from them a stone's cast, and kneeling down He prayed (St. Luke xxii.). And when He had gone forward a little, He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed (St. Mark xiv.). And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*A. And when He had gone forward a little.*

We must not forget what we have been told, that Jesus was already, before His Passion began, very much worn and enaciated. We may therefore contemplate Him making His way down the rough incline with very great difficulty. And though the three Apostles have been directed to stay where they were, yet we may perhaps assume that St. Peter and the sons of Zebedee, seeing how their beloved Master is tottering as He walks, follow Him a little way and offer Him help, till at length Jesus enters the Grotto where He wishes to make His prayer. Now it is that they see Him first sink down on His knees; and afterwards, as St. Mark relates (probably as he heard it from the eye-witness, St. Peter), *He fell flat on the ground.*

Then doubtless they understand from some sign given, or without a sign, that their Master wishes to be alone; and they go back in sadness to the bed of stone, where they lay themselves down. A little while surely they play as their Master had bidden, but weariness and sadness cut

short their prayer too soon, and oppressive sleep overcomes them on their hard bed.

## STATION II.

*He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed* (St. Mark xiv. 35).

A. As He sinks down upon His knees, and then *falls flat on the ground*, with His sacred face pressed against the earth, we must once more call to mind that word He had just uttered: *My Soul is sorrowful even unto death*; and those other words afterwards written by the inspired Evangelist: *He began to fear and to be heavy, to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

Fear (*pavore*), heaviness, weary tedium (*tædere*), sadness (*mæstus esse*), and a sorrow unto death (*tristis*), are bowing down His worn Body to the ground.

"*Attendite.*" Full of anguish as this spectacle is, it is better far to go to this house of mourning than to any house of feasting. When Simon Peter said on Thabor: *It is good for us to be here! Let us make three tabernacles*; the inspired Evangelist adds: *He knew not what he said.* But if we come in spirit to the Grotto of the Agony, and say: *It is good for us to be here!* no inspired voice from Heaven will ever chide us, nor tell us that we know not what we say.

*It is good for us to be here, because by the sadness of His countenance*, by the sadness of His sacred face pressed down to the earth, the *mind of the offender is corrected* (Eccl. vii.).

The mind and the heart of the poor sinner will be corrected and converted and changed here. It is wise to stay here: *The heart of the wise is where there is mourning*, and above all where the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, our Surety, our Brother, is in an agony.

B. *He began to fear and to be heavy, to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

We are to look upon Him attentively; to listen to His sighs and His words, to watch His movements; to

read, as well as we can, His secret thoughts; to gauge and measure, as far as we are able, the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of His distress; and to think in wonder as we watch Him, that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He can, if He pleases, entirely deliver Himself. He can shake off at once all suffering, all infirmity, and rise up in happiness ineffable. But with all His Heart He chooses and elects to be here, because *He has loved me, and delivered Himself for me.* We must then reflect and see what kind of thoughts rise up in our own minds.

While we contemplate His prostration, St. Ignatius bids us specially form strong desires for the grace of compassion, but compassion rightly understood, which consists not in some tender and pleasant emotions, but in a heavenly strength that makes us willing to share His sufferings. For what is compassion, what is sympathy, but a state of suffering with another who is suffering?

C. *He began to fear, to be heavy, to grow sorrowful, and to be sad.*

To fear! "If so," a faithful servant of our Lord exclaims, "If so, how is it written: *Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? I studied that I might know this thing. It is a labour in my sight*" (Psalm lxxii.).

One good answer is suggested by a word written by St. Denis the Areopagite. He speaks of the ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS or His GOODNESS during the Passion. "True it is, dear Lord: '*magna est ut mare contritio tua*'—Great as the ocean is Thy crushing sorrow; and well may the Prophet ask: '*Quis medellitur tibi*' (Lament. ii.)—*Who shall heal Thy deep wounds?*" Yet nowhere else is His great power and strength manifested as here in the ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS or His GOODNESS. The oppressive thoughts come in upon His Soul like the waves of a great ocean; and every one of these oppressive thoughts has a darkness and a poison added to it by the wicked spirits who are for the hour the *gods of this world* (2 Cor. iv.).

But still, "never can the waters of this great ocean quench Thy charity, Lord Jesus, neither can the floods drown it.

He is fallen *flat on the ground*: yes, full of fear and heaviness and sadness and sorrow; yes, but all the while He is not the conquered one, but the conqueror; the *strong man armed*, than whom no stronger can come; the giant that shall run on His way rejoicing.

As then we stand in the Grotto of Gethsemani, it is to contemplate most reverently this ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS OF HIS GOODNESS.

D. *He began to fear and to be heavy.*

But now, again, asks His disciple, "If He is full of fear and weighed down by heaviness of heart, what is to become of my faith? How can I say to Him: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*? Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father?"

In answer, the holy and humble men who put this question give us this answer; that when the Eternal Son of God undertook to be our Saviour, it is an essential part of His plan that He is to be truly and really a man, a son of Adam, made after the model of the first Adam: "*Corpus autem apłasti mihi*"—*Thou hast fitted a Body to Me, Thy only-begotten Son.*

This is His word to His Eternal Father. A true human Body He is to have, and a true human Soul.

But this is not enough; for this difficulty still remains: how can a human body and a human soul suffer pain and sorrow, when fitted and united to the Son of God? The blessed in Heaven will, after the final resurrection, have true human bodies and true human souls; but the body that was *sown in corruption, shall rise in incorruption: sown in weakness, it shall rise in power* (1 Cor. xv.). So, too, will the glorified soul be changed; *nor mourning nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.). If this is to be so, because the blessed shall then be with God, and in the enjoyment of the Beatific

Vision, or as St. John expresses it, *if they shall be like to God, because they see Him as He is in Himself*, how comes it that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Man-God Who, every hour and every moment, sees God as He is in Himself, can have a Body and Soul that are not at all times entirely exempt from weakness and sorrow and mourning? To this question, one way of replying is to answer as the Prophet Ezechiel answered God: "*Domine, tu nosti*"—*Thou knowest, O Lord* (Ezech. xxxvii.).

"Thou knowest, Lord, how and by what means Thou hast conquered all obstacles in order to be true God and true Man; in order to be God, and yet to suffer and die; in order to be God and yet High Priest among men, *tempted in all things like they are*" (Hebrews iv.).

What we know is this, that when He resolved to become Man, the Angel said to His Blessed Mother: *No word shall be impossible with God.*

That God should become a Man, that God should die, that a woman should be God's own Mother, is so far above all created thoughts, and all that created intelligence could look for, that, after this, when we hear of the countless miracles and prodigies worked in Christ's Eucharistic Life, we need only make this one reply: *No word shall be impossible with God.*

It was not a wonder that on Thabor *His face did shine as the sun*. The daily and hourly miracle is that the Sacred Body and most holy Soul are not always resplendent with the glory of the Divinity.

E. *He began to fear.*

This much is, however, quite certain, that no passions can disturb our Saviour, except by His permission. The passions are sometimes divided into natural passions and moral passions. The body is naturally affected by cold and heat. When therefore the body suffers from cold or heat, this is natural passion. Cold and heat do their work quite independently of man's will; and there is no

moral fault in being affected by cold or heat. It is *God Who makes His sun to shine upon the good and the bad*, and neither just nor unjust *shall stand against the face of His cold* (Psalm cxlvii.).

Then come the moral passions, so called because through their influence man becomes better or worse, less holy or more holy. Such are the passions of fear, of sadness, of anger, and the rest.

With regard to all these passions, natural and moral, it is quite certain that they cannot affect our Lord unless He Himself wishes to be affected by them.

We read of the monarch Assuennus, that not even his queen could enter his presence until he called for her. So may we say of all human passions that they cannot trouble the Soul of our Lord unless at His command. Hence we have seen that in the story of the raising of Lazarus it is written that *He troubled Himself*. The winds and the waves obey Him, and so must cold and heat, fear and sorrow, heaviness and sadness, and every other passion be ever completely subject to Him. They cannot affect Him but when He wills it, and as much as He wills it.

#### *F. He began to fear.*

A holy writer has explained this action of fear and sadness on the Soul of our Lord by this comparison. A military prince, ambitious to excel in sword-play, picks out the most expert swordsman in his army, and commands him to put forth all his skill while fencing with him, and promises to reward him well for doing so. He is quite content to bear defeat, and even severe scars, if only he can gain his point, and become a perfect swordsman.

So is it now. An hour ago our Lord said to His disciples: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (St. John xvi. 33). He now wishes also to be able to say to all His followers in time to come, "Have confidence in the hour of temptation, for I have overcome the tempter". And therefore, desirous that we may all know that *He* (can) have *compassion on our infirmities*, He has resolved

to be *tempted in all things as we are, but without sin* (Hebrews iv.); that is to say, to experience in Himself the effect of our passions; to let our passions rise within Him, like a sea-storm; nay, to allow Satan to intensify, as far as he can, these human passions; but still to conquer them all by His love, strong as death.

#### *G. He began to fear.*

We have seen how Tertullian describes God our Father as labouring and studying with infinite diligence when He was creating Adam, because the first man was to be a likeness of the perfect Man Who was to come, Jesus Christ, the Man-God. In Christ, then, all is perfection. As, therefore, the more perfect eye sees better, and the more perfect and delicate ear hears better, so His perfect Heart, and His most perfect sensitive nature can, when He permits the passions to work, suffer far more acutely and intensely than the natures of ordinary men can suffer.

No heart on earth ever felt kindness or unkindness as the Sacred Heart of Jesus does.

Here then we may find an answer to a question put by St. Laurence Justinian: "Can joy then be sad? Can strength be afraid? Can courage be timid? Can the glorified suffer tediousness? Art Thou the Lord of hosts, and yet fearful?"

The first part of the answer Isaiah furnishes: "*Oblatus est quia ipse voluit*"—*He was offered as a Victim because Himself willed it*. He is offered to death, and He is exposed to all the raging of a storm of passions, because Himself wills to be *tempted in all things as we are*. Divine strength cannot fear, Divine glory cannot suffer heaviness, unless through charity and love it wills to suffer, and exerts its almighty power in order to become capable of suffering fear and sadness.

Secondly; but having once Himself elected to be tempted, and to suffer from the different human passions, there never was on the earth one so fitted for extreme

suffering as He is. Next to Him comes His own Blessed Mother, because her sinless soul and immaculate body are so perfect a copy of the Soul and Body of her Divine Son.

H. Then, as we are taught in contemplation to study not only the outward person, but also the inward thoughts, we are allowed to try in our poor way to find out, *if we can*, what are the chief objects that are presented to our Lord's Soul to awaken fear and sadness and heaviness of Heart.

Some of our spiritual guides answer:—

1. *Fear* is awakened by His coming Death, and the terrible circumstances of His Death.

2. Oppression and most weary *tediousness*, by the sight of all the opposition which He shall encounter from men and devils in His work of redeeming those He loves so much.

3. *Sorrow* unto death is caused by the sight of sin; sin past, sin present, sin to come; the offence, the displeasure, the dishonour, the ingratitude, the treason and treachery and malice heaped upon His Eternal Father by sin.

1. *He began to fear.*

By His own permission, then, the natural fear of death is working on Him. As it is natural to men to feel cold and heat, hunger and thirst, so is it natural to fear with great fear the wrench that separates soul from body; that cruel wrench which tears asunder two companions which God joined together, and did not intend to be sundered.

For death had no place in the original programme of our Creator. *Death is only the wages of sin* (Romans vi.). It is to our earthly father, Adam, not to our Father in Heaven, that we are indebted for death. *By a man came death* (1 Cor. xv.). *By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men* (Romans v.). More than any man that ever lived, our Saviour Jesus, lying here on the ground, is suffering the fear of death.

In our case, when the fear of death comes, there is this alleviation, that we know that when we die we are receiving the just reward of our deeds. All through life we are accustomed to the thought that death is due to us. But neither the Body nor the Soul of our Lord Jesus have ever done any evil that subjects them to the bitterness of death. By God they were joined together, and neither man nor fallen angel have any right to sever what God has so joined.

Slavery is doubly and trebly bitter to one not born to it; to one like holy Joseph, the loved son of a good father in a happy home, who, without crime, is most cruelly consigned to all the sufferings of a slave. *Without any fault I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews. Put Pharao in mind to take me out of this prison* (Gen. xl.). So may we say, that by all rights Jesus was not born to die, nor created to die. Death had no claim over Him.

Sad indeed was the moan of that hapless King of Amalec, Agag, when he was brought out to die, and stood shivering with fear, and sighing out his sad parting words, "*Sicine separat amara mors?*"—*Does bitter death sunder and sever in this way?* But these sad words give us no idea of the anguish which, by His permission, the thought of coming death is causing in the Soul of Christ Jesus.

Ecclesiasticus exclaims: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to the man who hath peace in his possession! to a man that is at rest: and whose ways are prosperous in all things, and that is yet able to take meat!* (Eccclus. xli.). This is all most true. But still, never to any prosperous man in this world did the remembrance of death bring fear and anguish so intense as that which is this night weighing on the soul of this weary and famished and exhausted Man of Sorrows, Who has fallen there *flat on the ground*, but not to be at rest.

It is a historian of the early Christian days, Hegesippus, who records an ancient tradition, that on the spot where our Lord lies in the Grotto, a plant sprang up, on

the leaves of which were read the words : *O mors quam amara es !*—"O death, how bitter art thou !"

If this miracle was wrought, it cannot be surprising. For our Lord surely wishes men to know well and understand that He has thoroughly tasted and sanctified and conquered all the extreme bitterness of death.

Holy writers tell us, as we have seen, that not only on Calvary did He taste all the bitterness of death, but that in the Garden, when He utters that word, *My soul is sorrowful unto death*, He is already going through all the anguish that death causes.

*J. He began to fear.*

And it is not only the natural fear of death that is disturbing His Sacred Soul.

The stillness of the night-time, and those sounds of preparation which come from the Temple area and the barracks, and are breaking the silence ; the close proximity too of the Prætorium and Calvary, all are helping to imprint upon His imagination a most vivid picture of those countless shapes of woe and suffering that are to be crowded into the watches of to-night, and the watches of to-morrow. *The waters have come in even to My Soul. I stuck fast in the mire of the deep : and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psalm lxxviii.).

*K. And He began to be heavy.*

As we have seen, our masters tell us that it is the knowledge of all the opposition, which men and wicked spirits will make to His loving plan, which heaps upon His Sacred Soul a load of depression, heaviness, and unspeakable disgust, and tediousness.

The father of lies, who had words ready from Holy Writ when he was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, now also while urging the thought of Judas' treason, and the little progress in holiness of the other disciples, has again the Sacred Text ready : "*Quæ utilitas in Sanguine Meo ?*"—*What profit is there in My Blood ?* (Psalm xxix.).

"Your boast was that You would draw all men to Yourself. Have You done it ? If so, why did You say this very night, that men *have both seen and hated Me and My Father ?* Who wrote for You those words in the Psalm—for from whose mouth are they supposed to come, if not from Yours,—*They are multiplied above the hairs of My head who hate Me without cause. My enemies have grown strong who have wrongfully persecuted Me ?* (Psalm lxxviii.). Your own chosen people, will they follow You ? Will they stand by You ? What mean these words : *I am become a stranger to My brethren, and an alien to the sons of My Mother. They that sat in the gate spoke against Me, and they that drank wine made Me their song ?* (Psalm lxxviii.). You have not forgotten, for Your Mother has often told You of it, the old man's prophecy concerning You : *This Child is set for the ruin of many. And Yourself, You told Your own people plainly : If you believe not that I am He (the Messiah), you shall die in your sins. To what purpose have You spoken ? They have not believed in You, and You know well that the sentence is written : Let them be blotted out of the Book of the living* (Psalm lxxviii.). '*Quæ utilitas in Sanguine Meo ?*'"

*L. He began to be sorrowful and to be sad.*

But sin is the special object that weighs down His Soul with crushing sorrow great as the sea. Of all other men the inspired Prophet asks : *Who understands sin ?*—"De-licia quis intelligit ?" But not of Christ Jesus can this be said. The Soul of this Man of Sorrows lying here on the earth, has the most complete and perfect knowledge of all the hideous malice of sin, and all the infinite displeasure and indignation and anger it awakens in His Eternal Father. He understands all this most perfectly from eternity, as Son of God. But now He, as God made Man, in a new way, understands experimentally : for He has, at this moment, the sins of the world laid upon Him.

M. Were His Soul as limited in its capacity as ours, the intolerable pressure of this overwhelming load of sin



would do away with and annul every other painful impression. For we see that from our narrow souls, if we may so speak, a great terror drives out a lesser fear. Men forget the fear of money losses, and fling their property overboard, when the storm, wrecking the ship, brings death present before their eyes. So, too, at times, imminent disgrace and suffering make men forget even the terrors of death. Our little souls have only room for one great fear at a time. But in the Soul of Jesus, there is ample space for all the different shapes of anguish. They are all within, and one does not impede another.

But among them all, immeasurably more oppressive than the rest, is sin—the consciousness that He is for the present lying there, under the eyes of His Eternal Father as the Sinner, the representative of the sinful family—for His Eternal Father *hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all* (Isaiah liii.).

N. "Attentive." Let us beg light to understand the length and breadth and height and depth of this terrible chastisement. *He hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.* For, the guilt alone excepted, everything that belongs to sin, and is connected with sin, is heaped on Him. The shame, the confusion, the fear, the anguish, the intense desolation, the unbearable weight of His Father's displeasure, all this is upon Him, and it would be only a relief if the mountains would fall upon Him, and the hills would cover Him, and deliver Him from this position.

To St. Paul was made a revelation of what this position is. He writes to the Corinthians that the Eternal Father made His Divine Son, *Who knew not sin*, become sin, *that we sinners might become the justice of God in Him* (2 Cor. v. 21). He is become sin. The brazen serpent, therefore, which by rights is the emblem of Satan, is now the type and emblem of Jesus in His Passion, because throughout His Passion He is always, guilt excepted, the sinner's other self. He is personating sin and the sinner, and bearing the displeasure of His Father, and all the other

effects of sin. He is crushed down to the ground by the intolerable sense of the hatred His Eternal Father bears to sin, to the sins of that guilty race to which He belongs, and which He has undertaken to represent.

It will help us to realise a little His position if we call to mind how a good loyal father has sometimes been made to endure the cruel, pitiless reproaches of his sovereign for the crimes his son has committed.

A father is identified with his son because he is his father, but immeasurably more is the Lord Jesus, Who lies here, identified with the sinner. For He has Himself, knowingly and deliberately, in the very strictest sense, undertaken to be his proxy. And His Eternal Father has taken Him at His word, and the *chastisement of our peace is upon Him. And the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.*

O. *He began to fear and to be heavy.*

None of the disciples are witnesses of the prostration of their Master in the Grotto. A little later, it is too much for their weakness even to see Him, a prisoner in the hands of the soldiers. They shall be scandalised in that hour. Their confidence and trust in Him shall be shaken. How if they had seen Him not merely held forcibly as a prisoner by men, but apparently Himself given up to the human passions of fear and sadness? This would have been a far greater stumbling-block. For a man bound with cords and chains by others, may still be very strong and courageous in his own soul. But in the Grotto all seems to the eye and the ear to prove internal weakness.

P. If human wisdom, or even the wisdom of angels, had been consulted before the Sacred Passion began, the wisest might have said, *Absit hoc a te!* "Forbid, O Lord, this prostration and depression. It seems to be a degradation of Thy infinite dignity."

But (1) St. Chrysostom answers, "He listens more to the urgent demands of His charity than to what is due to His dignity".

Then (2) a few days later He said near Emmaus, *Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer?* His meaning was: "If you study the Sacred Books, will you not see clearly in them that if the merciful design of My Father is to be carried out, it is quite necessary that His Christ is to be a Man of Sorrows?"

But then the further question arises: "Why does the all-wise and all-good God will that His Divine Son should be cast down into these lower depths of humiliation?" Lower depths, because, as has been said, when He is in the hands of His enemies, He still stands erect; He is all the while the Giant rejoicing to run His way; but now there are no soldiers here, no armed servants; all His prostration seems to come from His own internal passions, and He is crying aloud for help, which He never does later when men are torturing Him.

One answer is, that it is quite true that the signs of weakness are greater now than on the morrow. To the eye of human wisdom, therefore, there seems to be more degradation here.

But when once we know that our Saviour lies here in these depths, simply because He loves us, and is choosing the best method of drawing us out of the depths; then what seems like the lowest degradation ceases to be a scandal, and helps powerfully to make us comprehend what St. Paul calls *the breadth and length and height and depth of His charity*.

We are contemplating weakness—yes, but the *almighty weakness of His goodness*, which will conquer Satan, and soften our hard hearts, and win for countless multitudes of men and women grace to conquer the strongest efforts of the tempter.

Q. He says, then, that it is necessary for Him to suffer. But why so? Because, in order to carry out His Father's designs, He wishes to be to us:

*The Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

1. *The Life.* St Thomas, in the well-known words of

his hymn, teaches us that our Lord could have redeemed us by one drop of His blood. Indeed, one tear, one prayer, any one act of His as Man, would have sufficed. For as in our social life we see that a book given by some great hero who is dazzling the world derives from the giver a value immeasurably beyond its intrinsic worth, so we can understand that as every one of our Lord's acts, whether He eats, or drinks, or walks, always is the act of the God-Man, and is always animated by perfect love for His Father, so every act necessarily is of an infinite value, and quite sufficient to obtain our forgiveness. So that by shedding one tear He could have worked our redemption, and brought within our reach justification and eternal life. Had He then adopted this method, He would have been entitled to be called our Life.

But moved by His boundless love and compassion for us, the Eternal Father decreed that His Divine Son shall not win our forgiveness in this easier way, simply through the reverence due to His infinite dignity, but shall redeem by a process much more painful to Himself.

It is decreed, therefore, that He is to pay back the debt, the whole debt, due from the sinner.

"*Quæ non rapui tunc exsolvèbam*" (Psaln lxviii.). Then did I pay back that which I did not take away, but which the sinner owed.

As Jacob put on Esau's garments to secure the blessing that belonged to his brother, so Jesus Christ, *the First-born among many brethren*, is to put on the garment of His sinful brethren, in order to bring down on Himself, as far as may be, the full weight of the sinner's malediction. One reason why this plan is expedient and necessary, is that He wishes to be to us not only the Life, but also *the Truth*.

2. *The Truth*, for by enduring His Passion, He teaches us many truths.

(a) First, the father of lies has tried to persuade men that Jesus is not really a Man, and therefore cannot

really suffer. It would have been far easier to have spread this fatal deception if our Saviour had won our forgiveness by one tear. It is when we seriously contemplate His sufferings that we believe firmly and beyond doubt that He is truly a Man, with a human Soul and a human Body.

(b) Again. He wishes most earnestly to convince us of the great truth that He loves us and has loved us. If we are slow to believe this fundamental truth now, though we see His sufferings, what would be our fatal incredulity if we had not the sacred scenes of the Passion to contemplate?

(c) Moreover, one of our greatest difficulties is to understand the true nature of sin.

Nowhere else can we get so much light thrown on sin and the consequences of sin as while contemplating these scenes of the Sacred Passion. For that great truth is continually brought before us: *If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*

And so His Cross becomes, as St. Augustine calls it, not only, "the altar of sacrifice," but also the *Cathedra docentis*: our Master's pulpit, and His chair of doctrine.

(d) One other truth of incalculable value which Jesus teaches to His disciples while prostrate in the Grotto is this, that to feel intensely fear and heaviness and desolation and sadness, and to be visited by all manner of distressing temptations, is quite compatible with close union with God, and high sanctity. Like the pains of the body, the inward agony of desolation is one of the penalties of sin. But through the Passion of our Lord all is made new. The sufferings of the martyrs are no longer a penalty, but the very highest privilege. Even so, the bitterness of desolation, instead of being a mark of God's displeasure, is oftentimes a share of the chalice granted as a special favour to a faithful servant.

Who among the countless saints of God would have been able to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit—*Make*

*not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God in patience. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy sorrow endure and in thy humiliation keep patience* (Ecclesi. ii.)—had they not learned the great lessons taught by our Divine Master while He lies in His Agony in Gethsemani?

But we want still more than this. It is not enough for our weakness to be taught. Therefore He resolves to become for us *the Way*, and our companion on the way.

### 3. *The Way.*

*Take up your cross and follow Me*, is His short, plain, and loving direction to each of us who wishes to reach the Eternal Home of God. *Follow Me.*

He has become Man to be our companion through the *burden and heat of the day* on earth. *My yoke is sweet*, He says. But "how can a yoke be sweet, dear Lord?" Yes, for if He walks ever by our side, and becomes our help-mate, bearing the yoke with each of us, then indeed the yoke is made sweet and the burden light.

Surely, we do not think enough of the wonderful way in which our journey up the mountain of God is made easy by companionship with Jesus and His Blessed Mother.

A timid man has to cross by night a lonely moor. It is absolutely necessary for him to go, but no amount of argument can induce him to face the terrible darkness. Fear takes from him all the *succours of thought*. But if a kind and courageous friend, who knows the way well, and is brave and well armed, offers to be his companion across the dark solitude, all difficulty is at an end; he starts at once. Our God had tried in vain threats and promises and very heavy punishments to induce men to walk steadily on the road to Heaven; but all was in vain till the Son of God became Man and gave Himself to each of us as our companion.

*Blessed be the Lord day by day. The God of our salvation will make our journey prosperous to us. Our God is the God of salvation* (Psalms lxvii.).

## STATION III.

## THE PRAYER.

*He fell upon His face, praying and saying : My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed that the hour might pass from Him. And He saith : Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee, remove this chalice from Me, but not what I will, but what Thou wilt (St. Mark xiv.). Kneeling down He prayed, saying : Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but yet not My will, but Thine be done (St. Luke xxii.).*

*A. My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.*

Pious and painstaking commentators have studied much to ascertain precisely what is here the petition of our Blessed Lord.

Some writers have found so much difficulty in harmonising the fear and heaviness and sadness of our Saviour with His Divine strength and His perfect obedience to His Father's will—always so prompt and so loving—that they have suggested that some errors have doubtless crept into the Sacred Text. But this surmise finds no favour with the holy guides and teachers whom we are following.

B. The biographer of St. Catherine of Siena states that our Lord revealed to her that His prayer was that the delay might be abbreviated, and that His blood might quickly and at once pass from Him for the salvation of men.

That such a desire is in the Soul of our Lord cannot be doubted. For we remember His words in the Cenacle : *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you : and again, His former words, I have a baptism wherewith to be baptised. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished ?* This interpretation also fits in with the words of our Saviour to the traitor, who was to become the leader of the midnight raid upon the Garden, *What thou dost, do quickly.*

Again, if this explanation be accepted, the profuse sweat of blood which came on in the Grotto may be considered an answer to this cry of our Lord's Heart, desiring to begin quickly to pour out the chalice of salvation.

C. The most approved commentators, however, while they do not deny that this thought is in our Lord's mind during His desolation in the Grotto, as it was before, yet do not consider that this interpretation is adequate and sufficient to account for such words as we have in our version : *Remove this chalice from Me.* They consider it as certain that one part of our Lord's prayer—a conditional part—is that, if consistently with His Father's will and His Father's glory He can escape from facing the horrors that are before Him, this may be done.

Let us observe in passing that in the Greek text of St. Luke's Gospel the prayer of our Saviour is expressed even more reverently than in the Latin, or in our version. Translated literally, the prayer in the Greek is : *Father, if Thou wiltst to transfer this chalice from Me : but yet, not My will but Thine be done.* The Latin text and our version make our Lord utter an explicit petition : *"St vis, transfer."*—*If Thou wilt, remove this chalice.* In the Greek, we read : *ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ, εἰ βούλει ἀποστρέφῃς—If Thou wiltst to transfer : without any explicit petition.*

D. *Let this chalice pass from Me.*

What does the word *chalice* here mean ? Our Lord Himself seems to tell us when later He says in the Garden : *The chalice which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it ?* The *chalice* here must mean : "The bitter Passion which in all its details has been arranged for Me by My Father".

We have already seen that though the Passion appears to be the work of wicked men inspired and guided by the spirits of darkness, yet all the designs and plans of these enemies have been, we may say, revised by the Divine Providence, and are so ordered that they shall in every detail subserve to what the Eternal Father wills. Consequently, the bitter *chalice* comes in the end to Jesus,

mingled and prepared by His Father, with the bitterness augmented or tempered just as the merciful designs of God's charity require.

E. But the *chalice* has a further meaning. For our Blessed Saviour has in the Cenacle been giving to His little flock the chalice of His Blood to be their drink; and this draught is to strengthen them and inebriate them.

*Passio Christi, conforta me. Sanguis Christi, inebria me.* Therefore our Blessed Saviour is first to drink the bitter *chalice* of His Passion, and then His Passion, with all its sorrows and all its merits, is to pass with His Sacred Blood into the souls of His disciples.

F. Hence we may see how, possibly, the pious interpretation of St. Catherine of Siena may fit in with the more critical rendering of the commentators. Our Lord's petition may be that if the *chalice* of His Blood may, conformably with His Father's will, pass from Him *quickly and at once*, without His being obliged to go through all the weary delay, and all the sins, and all the horrors of treachery, and base weakness, and falsehood, and malice, and cruelty, that are before Him, this may be done.

G. The horrors from which the Soul of our Saviour is shrinking are, as careful interpreters teach us:

1. Death.
2. Death with the accompaniments that are in store for Him.

He Himself enumerated these accompaniments, or circumstances, a week ago when near Jericho.

1. *The Son of Man shall be betrayed* to the Chief Priests and the Scribes.
  2. They shall condemn Him to death.
  3. They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles.
  4. They (the Gentiles) shall mock Him and spit on Him.
  5. They shall scourge Him.
  6. They shall kill Him.
  7. St. Matthew adds: He shall be crucified.
- All these seven cruel details are oppressing the most

gentle and loving and sensitive Heart of Jesus. We have already seen that no heart ever felt kindness or unkindness as much as His Heart does. Therefore, to be betrayed by His own chosen disciple; to be condemned to death by His own Priests; to be delivered up by His own Priests and people to the Pagan Romans whom His Priests and people dread and detest; to be handed over by them to the pitiless Gentiles, purposely and expressly in order that He may be more heartlessly and cruelly mocked and scourged, and at last be put to death by the most terrible form of execution that has been till now invented—these are, we may say, the headings of the chapters in the terrible story which is to be compressed into the watches of this night and the watches of to-morrow.

H. Then too, as we know, worse than all these outward torments, the displeasure of His Eternal Father, the anger of His Father against sin and the sinner, is to weigh Him down, during the long, slow hours of this night—slow down, a slowness that we cannot measure—before He can begin, as it were, to run His way as a giant.

Therefore, as we may observe, in St. Mark's narrative we read: *He prayed that the hour might pass from Him.* These words, doubtless, may mean the whole time of His Passion; but may they not also imply that the heaviest burden weighing on Him is the desolation of these long, long hours in the Grotto?

I. For we must not forget that He is passing through the anguish of desolation in its most aggravated form. When the interpretation of our Lord's prayer, given by St. Catherine of Siena, was just now under consideration, it was said that as He had all through life been straitened with a most vehement desire to be baptised in His Blood, He must still be of the same mind in the Grotto. And this must be quite true; for in His loving desire to do the work given to Him by His Father, He is the same Jesus that He was yesterday and heretofore. But still,

that also is most true which we read in the 29th Psalm concerning the state of a soul in consolation, contrasted with its thoughts while the darkness of desolation is spread over it: *In my abundance* (when grace and strength from Heaven abound) *I said: I shall never be moved. O Lord, in Thy favour Thou gavest strength to my beauty.* But the hour of sunshine is past, and now *Thou turnest away Thy face from me and I became troubled.* Here in this hour the face of His Father is turned away from Jesus, the Man Who represents sin and all the race of sinners. All that the lash and the thorns and the nails can do, is not to be compared with the torment of this exile.

*J. I have always feared God, holy Job wrote, as waves swelling over me; and His weight I was not able to bear* (c. xxxi.). Alas! he knew nothing, nothing at all, of the weight of the swelling waves that have entered into the Soul of our Lord, and overwhelmed Him (Psalm lxviii.). What wonder that the Holy Spirit tells us that *the patient man is better than the valiant; and he that ruleth his spirit better than he that taketh cities* (Prov. xvi.). The patient man, that is, the man suffering and enduring with constancy, is stronger and more courageous than the valiant man who rushes upon his enemies. Throughout His Sacred Passion, our meek Saviour is conquering Satan, and gaining possession of the earth *by endurance.* He allows all His enemies to let loose their malice against Him: and when all is consummated, they are exhausted and can do no more, and He remains unsubdued, and the triumphant conqueror.

But we must observe still further that the Holy Spirit adds: *He who rules his spirit is better than he who taketh cities.* In other scenes of the Passion, we shall find our Lord enduring all things from His enemies, but here we find Him ruling His own spirit; allowing His human passions to put forth their strength within His breast, but ruling them all, and remaining always the same Jesus, the same unconquered Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, and obedient to His Eternal Father unto death.

Again, then, we must remind ourselves of the word of a holy Saint, that we are in Gethsemani contemplating the OMNIPOTENT INFIRMITY OF HIS GOODNESS.

K. There are, then, two parts in the prayer of our Lord: one conditional, the other absolute. The first is, *If it be possible may this chalice pass from Me*; and, according to the different interpretations, this means:—

(a) If it be possible, may the grace of redemption pass from Me into the souls of men without My tasting all the bitterness of death.

(b) Or, if death must come, then, if it be possible, may it not be accompanied with all the horrors that I see before Me.

(c) Or, if it be possible, may the chalice of My Blood pass from Me quickly and at once, without any long hours of delay.

(d) Or, if it be possible, let My enemies begin their work, and let this terrible time of anguish under the displeasure of My Father pass from Me.

(e) Or, if it be possible, *tantus labor non sit cassus*: let not My Blood be unprofitable to so many; let not the plentiful redemption be rejected by My people, or by generations to come.

(f) Or, if it be possible, may the chalice of My Blood pass from Me without sin, without malice, without blasphemy, without sacrifice, without Deicide.

L. But above all these conditional petitions rises the loud cry that is entirely absolute and without any possible condition annexed, *Nevertheless, My Father, not as I will, but as Thou.*

This is the prayer which, in presence of all the fears, and all the sadness, and all the heaviness, and all the sorrow at work within Him, He pours forth with His *whole Heart*, with His *whole Soul*, with His *whole Mind*, with His *whole strength*.

M. Well have spiritual writers observed that it is only during these internal conflicts, first in the Garden and

afterwards on the Cross, that our Blessed Saviour cries aloud to His Father for help. During the scourging, during the crowning, during the crucifixion, no such cry for help is heard. The conclusion is that the anguish of internal desolation, during which Satan is permitted to act upon the soul, is far more distressing and overwhelming than the pains inflicted by men on the body.

N. And while we thus fix the eyes of our mind on His great sorrow, and listen to our Lord saying to us: *Come and see if there be sorrow like to Mine*, let us also keep in mind St. Paul's word: *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*. It is for me that He is enduring this extreme anguish.

For me. He is lying down here on the ground, ready to be the helpmate of every poor sinner; to be yoked to every one burdened with sin, and the effects of sin; to join His own great contrition to the light and trivial sorrow for sin that passes, if we may so speak, over the surface of our souls.

For me. Look well, then, and do according to the model; strive to share His great contrition. Look well, till some glimmer of light comes to show what sin must be. Look well, till a strong faith grows, that if the innocent soul suffers in this way for sin not its own, more terrible immeasurably will be the weeping and waiting and gnashing of teeth of the real sinner if when the harvest is past and the summer is ended, we are not saved (Jerem. viii.).

#### STATION IV.

##### THE COMFORTING ANGEL.

*And there appeared to Him an Angel from Heaven, strengthening Him* (St. Luke xxii. 43).

A. Is this chosen Angel the Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael, or the Angel of the Incarnation, St. Gabriel? *Domine, tu nosti*—Lord Jesus, Thou knowest Some holy Fathers lean to one opinion, some to the other The Holy Spirit, Who judged it right to tell us the name

of the Archangel who announced the Incarnation to our Lady, has not thought it necessary to reveal to us which of the blessed spirits was selected for the work of comforting our Lord.

B. Holy writers are, as we might expect, lost in amazement at the spectacle of a creature sustaining and strengthening and comforting his God. When St. Gabriel brought to our Lady God's proposal that His Son should become her Son, before giving her answer, she asked the prudent question: *How shall this be done?* and the Archangel, after giving her the explanation of the mystery, summed up all in this short sentence: *No word shall be impossible with God*. In these words we must look for the solution of all the difficulties which meet us in contemplating the Life and Death of Jesus Christ on earth, and His Eucharistic Life also. There is nothing too high to be said of God made Man; and, putting sin aside, there is nothing so lowly that it cannot be found in the Life and Death of the Man-God. What can be said so startling as St. Paul's words, when he describes Him as *one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin*; and when he tells us that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh? Therefore this is only one instance, among countless others, of the exertion of Divine power whereby God has enabled His only Son to suffer—without sin, indeed—but after the manner of sinful men, and to be reduced by suffering to a condition in which a creature can console his God. *No word shall be impossible with God*.

How could the disciples, on the Palm Sunday, say to the owner of the ass and the colt: *The Lord hath need of them?* How can the Lord have need of our possessions, when it is expressly written, *Thou art my God, because Thou hast no need of my goods?* (Psalm xv.). The answer is: *No word shall be impossible with God*. Now that He has for love of us become Man, there is no longer any word impossible. Till now, we may truly say, God was encompassed round about by impossibilities. God could not suffer, God could

not be weary, God could not be poor, God could not die. But now that He is God and Man, nothing is too high for Him nothing too lowly—except sin.

C. Holy writers, however, go into the question a little further, and ask: How could an Angel comfort our suffering Lord?

When God is pleased to act upon us, His power is unlimited: He can kill, He can raise to life; He can wound, and He can heal; His word can reach, as St. Paul writes, *into the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow*; causing everywhere light in darkness, health in sickness, life in death.

But our holy guides and masters tell us that the blessed Angel who comforted Jesus had no power to work any internal change in His Soul, but could only spread out, as it were, before His mind certain thoughts or facts which He had permitted the thick veil of desolation to hide for the time.

When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, he showed Him from the mountain *all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*. So now the blessed Angel is empowered to spread out before His Soul certain words of Holy Writ containing promises which shall counteract the depressing fears and the heaviness which Satan has been labouring to increase.

“*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo?*”—*What profit is there in My Blood?* (Psalm xxix.)—the tempter has been urging. But now the blessed Angel baffles the tempter by recalling glorious promises: *If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand*.

Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled: by His knowledge shall this My servant justify many.

Therefore will I distribute to Him very many, and He shall divide the spoils of the strong, because He hath delivered His Soul unto death (Isaiah liii.).

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard

*shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them.*

*They shall not hurt nor shall they kill in all My holy mountain, for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea* (Isaiah xi.).

And then, moreover, even as we say to Holy Mary, *Hail, the Lord is with thee!* so might the blessed Archangel console our Lord's oppressed Soul by a similar word: “Thy Blessed Mother, Lord Jesus, is always with Thee; always full of grace, and all generations shall call her blessed, and she shall crush the serpent's head. In her at least Thy Life and Death shall work a plentiful redemption.”

D. Thus then the blessed Angel may comfort his own God; because God is become Man, and no word shall be impossible with God.

We may contemplate the rest of the heavenly choirs looking on with ineffable wonder and contentment while their privileged companion is thus exercising his admirable office.

We need not, however, envy the blessed Angel, since we too are so blessed during our short day of power here on earth, that every hour we can comfort the Heart of our Saviour.

Who is there among us that cannot kneel before the tabernacle of our Hidden God and say with truth—oh, too much truth!—that awful word uttered by the Roman Governor: *I have power, Lord Jesus, to crucify Thee, and I have power to set Thee free*: power to comfort Thee and console Thee unspeakably?

“*Attendite*.” For indeed we ought to spend a long time in examining how we use this great power over our Lord Jesus Christ. Are we crucifying Him? Are we comforting Him? He hath need of us; sore need of us. Are we helping Him? or cruelly neglecting Him?

E. And there appeared an Angel comforting Him.

In the Latin text we read that the Angel appeared to



Jesus: *Comfortans eum*: and we naturally incline to say in our language that the Angel was *comforting Him*. We must dwell a little upon our word *comfort*. For words as time goes on often lose their original meaning, till at last they mislead us.<sup>1</sup>

There are, then, two ways of *comforting* one who is suffering.

One is by removing the causes of his suffering, by relieving bodily pain, by proving that some torturing fear is quite groundless; by giving an alms that averts impending ruin.

The other, and oftentimes the better way of *comforting* is by *strengthening* the sufferer, so that he can now bear what before was becoming too heavy a burden.

Both methods of *comforting* are good, very good. Our Lord used both. Good physicians sometimes *relieve or remove pain*, sometimes *strengthen the sufferer* so that the body can better endure cold and heat and pain. St. Peter Claver also laboured hard, sometimes to diminish the sufferings of the negroes, sometimes to school them so that they could bear even worse trials.

In our common parlance, when we speak of comfort and comforting, we are often thinking merely of a lessening of pain and suffering.

We lose sight of the Latin word "*Comfortare*," whence our word comfort is derived; so that while the Latin means to strengthen and to render manly, our comforts and comfortable life frequently have anything but a

<sup>1</sup> It is observed that in the opening of his spiritual retreats St. Ignatius sets before us this fundamental principle: "Man was created to praise God our Lord, to show Him reverence and to serve Him." Why, it is sometimes asked, does he not rather begin with the great commandment: Man was created to love God our Lord?

One answer may be: that with the practical wisdom which is apparent throughout these Exercises, he keeps in mind that many come to retreat with an entirely false conception of the word *love*. At the close of the retreat, when the soul has been well schooled, he proposes a special contemplation that explains the true character of *love*, and excites a desire for *true love*; but many at the commencement of a retreat might be misled, and mistake sensible consolation, or some passing emotion, for heavenly love.

strengthening effect, their tendency being rather to enervate.

F. In the present instance it is evident that the blessed Angel comforts our Lord, not by taking pain away, but by presenting thoughts that may add strength to endure. He was comforted, Venerable Bede says, "by seeing the greatness of the future fruit, not by any lessening of the anguish of present pain". This is evident; for immediately after the Angel's visit, we read, *Being in agony, He prayed the longer*.

This word *agony* we borrow from the Greek language, in which it signifies a struggle, a conflict. In our language we commonly use the word to express the struggle which seems to go on between life and death before the soul is forced to leave the body, and so, therefore, the word *gradually* comes to mean any great pain of soul or body.

#### STATION V.

##### THE AGONY.

*And being in an agony, He prayed the longer (V. 43).*

##### A. *Being in an agony.*

Therefore the conflict, if we may use the word, in the Soul of our Blessed Saviour is not brought to an end, but intensified after the Angel's visit, yet so that His blessed Soul is strengthened to endure the increased suffering; not strengthened by the addition of new power, but strengthened because certain thoughts and considerations have been presented to the Soul of our Saviour which for a time had, by His permission, been covered with a veil.

##### B. *Being in an agony.*

When we speak of agony, or conflict, in the Soul of our Lord, we must not forget what our spiritual guides teach us, that between His sensitive nature that fears death and torment, and His will which is ever most closely united to the will of His Father, there is no real conflict.

In our souls a strong passion fights against our reason for the mastery, and too often succeeds in inducing the

will to rebel against conscience. But in the Soul of our Lord, all the passions of fear, sadness, and the rest, though intensified to the utmost limit, are in perfect subjection to right reason, and there is no shade or shadow of that rebellion which sin produces in *our* souls.

A holy writer has explained the state of our Lord's Soul by this comparison. An exceedingly good father here on earth holds the office of a judge; and after carefully hearing the evidence against his own son, must pronounce sentence. His mind is now thoroughly convinced, and he sees most clearly where his duty lies; and all conflict is at an end. His feeling for his son is as strong as ever, but there is no rebellion at work. His will is, if we may so speak, quite undivided, and he wholly and entirely approves of the course that his duty points out to him.

C. *And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

If the Cross is *Cathedra docentis*—our Lord's pulpit, whence He preaches to all men—we may say too of the Grotto in the Garden that it is His school-room, where He gives us lessons of inestimable worth.

*The waters, He says, are come in even to My Soul, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psalm lxxviii.); but, as we have seen already, *many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it* (Cant. viii.). Never for one moment is His Heart so engrossed with His own sorrows as to forget our souls. If later, when His Body was as mangled as His Soul is now bruised and wounded, He could say: *Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children*: we may be quite sure that this is His thought now also. For His charity does not change. Deliberately, and with an eternal forethought, if we may use the word, He has elected to sacrifice Himself for us. He has resolved to deliver up (to betray—*tradere*) His own Body and His own Soul to sorrow and anguish and death, because He values more the treasure He wishes to buy, than the price He intends to pay. The soul of man is now before Him more prominent and more vivid than any sorrow of His own.

In this hour, therefore, well does He remember that Satan will spread the darkness of desolation over the souls He loves: and that, when they are in that state, he will try to make them believe that God has abandoned them; and that prayer is no longer useful, or even possible. All the while, this lying spirit, more cruel than any savage beast, is the weakest and the basest of cowards, and will fly away dismayed, if man, or woman, or child will only resist him. Therefore it is that the Holy Spirit has taken care to record for our use that word: *Being in an agony, He prayed the longer*. And from this hard bed upon the ground, our Blessed Saviour says to us most earnestly, most imploringly: *Look and do according to the pattern*. REMEMBER Me when things go ill with thee. Resist My enemy and your enemy, the father of lies; for most certainly he will fly from you covered with shame intolerable.

When in anguish pray the longer. *Believe in God and He will recover thee. Ye that fear the Lord wait for His mercy. Ye that fear the Lord hope in Him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight* (Eccclus. ii.).

D. Satan often tries to persuade us to be impatient with God, to lose heart and to say with the men of Bethulia: *If after five days be past there come no aid, we will do the things which you have spoken*; that is, yield ourselves up to God's enemy and ours. Let us remember how wisely holy Judith rebuked those despairing men: *Who are you that tempt the Lord? You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day according to your pleasure. But forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg His pardon* (Judith viii.). When keeping the Holy Hour in this Grotto, the faithful in their contemplation learn that great lesson: *Patience is necessary for you. For yet a little, and a very little while, and He that is to come will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews x.).

## STATION VI.

*And being in an agony, He prayed the longer* (St. Luke xxii.). *Again the second time He went and prayed, saying: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done. And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

- A. In the first prayer of our Lord there were two parts:  
 (1) *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me*;  
 (2) *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou*.

The first part of the petition, as we see, is only conditional. It is the expression of the wish of His sensitive nature, which wish is not urged at all unduly. A holy writer has made use of this comparison to illustrate the prayer of our Lord. In a Council of Bishops, if there were a small minority, all very loyal and docile, they might express a very strong desire for some measure that would be good for their dioceses, but at the same time be perfectly willing and resigned to agree with the majority in what is best for the general good.

So here we see in our Lord's second prayer, that the wish of the minority—that is, the cry of His subordinate and perfectly subject sensitive nature—is no longer heard. His prayer is now entirely that the will of the Father be accomplished.

B. *My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, unless I drink it, Thy will be done*.

*Pass away* (Latin, *transire*, Greek, *παρελθεῖν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ*). Is our English version the best that could be? The Greek words lend themselves better to the sense revealed to St. Catherine: "If the chalice of My Blood cannot pass from Me into the souls of men". That word to us so sacred, "transubstantiation," does not mean the passing away of the substance of bread, but the change of one substance into another. The first prayer of our Lord therefore may have meant, not that the chalice might merely *pass away* from Him, but, if there is any way by which the chalice

of salvation, the chalice of My Blood, the fruits of My Redemption, can *pass from Me into the souls of men*, without My drinking slowly and to the dregs the bitter cup before Me, may this be done; still, not as I will, but as Thou.

C. *And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same words*.

Therefore, a repetition of the same words is not always a vain repetition.

There are not many words in the short prayer which our Blessed Saviour has given us to be the prayer of our whole lifetime on earth: *Pater noster*, etc. But each word is the heavenly bread on which the soul of man is to live. We ought, therefore, often and often to repeat the words, each so full of nourishment, and repeat them thoughtfully, begging the assistance of the Holy Ghost, that light may come to our minds and our hearts. *Veni, lumen cordium*.

D. *Saying the self-same words*.

When the soul is very much in earnest and full of intense desires, it does not want many words. The blind men knew well what they wanted, and they stuck fast to their short petition: *Son of David, have mercy on us—Lord, that I may see*.

The man who obtained the loaf at midnight did not win his petition by varying his words, but by importunate perseverance.

E. Neither does our Saviour advise us to use many words. *When you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens do. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard* (St. Matt. vi.). We do not need talent, nor eloquence, for prayer, but only an earnest desire.

## STATION VII.

*And His sweat became as drops of Blood, trickling down on the ground* (St. Luke xxii. 44).

A. The words seem to imply that already, before this, drops of sweat had been forced from the pores of our

Lord's Body by the anguish of His Soul. We see the cold sweat gather on the forehead of the dying, and we know how fear or anxious suspense will sometimes cause profuse perspiration to burst from the body.

Now, however, His sweat changes and becomes as *drops of Blood*. Does this phrase mean that the drops became like to blood, though they were not really blood? The holy Fathers and the learned commentators and the sense of the faithful are all in agreement in rejecting this interpretation. All believe that the words mean a sweat of real blood. So that St. Athanasius writes: "Anathema to him who denies that there was a sweat of Blood".

B. There is not only real blood, but further, the Greek word here used, *ρόμβοι*, which is rendered by our word, *drops*, signifies blood not very serous or watery, but blood thickened, and in what is called a grumous state. If blood in this condition flows down to the ground, it must be coming in very large quantities from the body, otherwise it would not flow, but would stand in globules or clots.

C. *As drops of Blood trickling down on the ground.*

St. Ignatius in his Exercises takes for granted that the garments of our Saviour are first drenched with this Blood, before it can trickle down on the ground. If so, this, too, would show that the quantity drained from the Sacred Body must have been exceedingly great.

D. *His sweat became as drops of Blood.*

This difficulty has been raised, that fear naturally drives the blood to the heart, so that the face becomes pale and the extremities cold. Thus it is that we speak of the *cold sweat* on the forehead when the agony of death sets in. One answer given to this objection is that we cannot judge from the ordinary action of fear what effect it would produce when intensified. For while moderate light helps us to read, light too intense may blind us. Food, also, and drink in moderation maintain activity of mind, but in excess they stupefy.

E. Another answer given is, that we need not believe that fear is the sole and entire cause of our Saviour's sweat of Blood.

One holy writer on the Sacred Passion has used this illustration to explain our Lord's condition. In the mill there are two stones grinding, the upper and the nether. If, then, in the wine-press, in like manner, there was a pressure from above and a pressure from below, the stream of grape-juice would be the result of the two. This is our Lord's condition; as He lies prostrate in prayer, there is within Him a double pressure. There is the pressure from below, from the sensitive nature which is causing fear and heaviness; but there is from above, the much stronger pressure of His infinite charity, which is longing that His Blood may flow, and love that conquers everywhere, in every detail of His Passion, now conquers fear also, and forces out His Sacred Blood.

If this be admitted, then this sweat of Blood may be considered, as we have seen, a partial answer to that cry of His Heart, that the time may be shortened, and that His Blood may pass quickly from Him into the souls of men.

F. *Being in an agony.*

Is His Blessed Mother in the Grotto when the drops of Blood are trickling down upon the ground? Writers on the Sacred Passion take it for granted that she is not. They argue from ancient custom, that like other virtuous women, she would not walk abroad after dark. This reasoning, however, is not conclusive. For are there not at times exceptions even to prudent and wholesome rules? Our Blessed Lady, walking upon the earth, is a quite exceptional and most unearthly work of God. She stands alone, the Blessed one among the women whom Eve had deprived of blessedness. She is the Lily among the thorns; the Immaculate among sinners; the Fleece plentifully bedewed with the graces of Heaven, when all around is parched and dried up. So that, had she gone with her

Divine Son to the Garden, in this point also she would have been an exception to ordinary rules.

She is the Most Prudent of Virgins, oh, yes! but heavenly and Divine prudence soars high above human prudence, and becomes merged in the folly of the Cross. Who so prudent as her Son Jesus? Yet where was human prudence when He betrayed Himself and all His rights, and became Surety for us sinners?

She is the Prudent Virgin; but her prudence, like her Divine Son's prudence, knows that there is a time to remain hidden and a time to walk abroad. So that, had she gone with her Divine Son to the Garden, as has been said, she would have been an exception to ordinary rule.

Holy women, it is argued, shrink from being abroad at night; and yet, the night was very far spent, and the day was very near its dawning, when Judith, who was a holy woman and the chaste type of the Virgin Mother, passed through the city gate and went down the hill *clothed with the garments of her gladness, and sandals on her feet, taking her bracelets and lilies and earlets and rings with her and decked with all her ornaments* (c. x.).

She was a holy woman, very holy; but because she was holy, she understood from above that the time of peace has its rules, and the time of fierce battle has other rules.

As Holy Mary is the second Eve, and as it stands in God's primeval decree that she is to share largely in the second great conflict with Lucifer, which is begun to-night; and as it is written in the very beginning of the prophecy that the enmities are to be between her and the serpent, it would be passing strange if she is to have no prominent share in the night watches of the Passion.

The fact, moreover, that the Garden belonged to her might render it probable that she could be there, and still sufficiently sheltered and retired.

A well-known modern painter represents her as watching through the window of her apartment in Jerusalem

the return of her Divine Son from Gethsemani. The holy Fra Angelico, on the other hand, in one of his paintings places her in the Garden near the sleeping disciples.

The Abbess Mary of Jesus (d'Agreda), according to the account she gives of her visions, sees our Blessed Lady in Jerusalem following in spirit every step and every movement of our Lord in the Garden. As He has three disciples with Him, so she has Magdalen and two other devout women. When He goes into the Grotto, she retires alone into her chamber, and prays in union with Him and shares all His agony. When He visits His disciples, she goes to her three companions to encourage them to pray.

This account harmonises with the common opinion that she is not, in body, present in the Garden, and also satisfies the mind of those who think that the second Eve must have had her full share in every stage of the Sacred Passion.

It seems repugnant to think that there was any scene of the great conflict in which the woman, the Blessed among women, the second Eve, did not take her part. *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?*

G. While then her Divine Son is lying prostrate in the Garden and being baptised with the baptism of His Sacred Blood for which His Soul has been yearning, we may contemplate our Blessed Lady also, with her Mother's heart bleeding; compassion working within her so strongly that it is as if she too was bleeding drop for drop.

It has been stated by a devout and learned writer in our days that at times during the Sacred Passion the tears that fell from her eyes were tears of blood.<sup>1</sup> This statement is found in a Revelation our Lady herself made to St. Bridget. We also meet with it more than once in the Revelations recorded by the Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus (d'Agreda).

H. We are permitted then to kneel down near her, as

<sup>1</sup> Father Frederick W. Faber, in *The Foot of the Cross*.

we contemplate her Son in His Agony. For it is not good for us to be alone when we gaze on His suffering—*Væ Soli*. If we are alone, and left to our own pusillanimity, the Sacred Passion may become a scandal to us. Withering fear may take possession, and blight heavenly hope and love. The heart may turn away hardened and scared.

But if we contemplate beside the Blessed Mother, and with her watch the Passion of her Son, we may expect an increase of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

And so, near in spirit to the Blessed Mother, with our eyes we are watching the prostrate form of our Saviour, and marking how His Sacred Body writhes on the ground—as the agonising writhe when death is coming—for He is in this hour, we must not forget it, sorrowful unto death, and tasting all the bitterness of death. And when at times He lifts for a moment His Sacred Head, we see in amazement that anguish and distress have driven away beauty from His pale and blood-stained face. Tears, and agony, and blood, and the dust of the earth have so changed His features that *His look (is) as it were hidden and despised* (Isaia's liii.). We can see neither comeliness nor even *sightliness*.

He looks like *one struck by God*. What wonder that the disciples are scandalised in Him! that the horrible fear occurs: "The Pharisees may be right. They call Him a seducer, an impostor, and one that has a devil!"

His own Apostle wrote in after times still stronger words of His condition: *Christ hath redeemed us, being made a curse for us* (Galat. iii.).

I. St. Ignatius advises us at times to forget other thoughts, and fix our minds on this one: how much Jesus is suffering—how much and in how many different ways. "*O vos omnes,*" He says Himself—*Give heed and see if there be sorrow like unto My sorrow*.

Whilst then we are watching with our eyes, our ears also are listening to His heavy breathing, to His long-drawn sighs, to His loud sobbing, to His moans of distress,

*I am become, His Prophet says for Him, I am become a worm, a writhing worm, and no man.*

"Oh, stay a little while, and see if there be sorrow and distress and agony like My sorrow and My agony."

J. The wise political calculating man of the world turns away impatient. Whose is the fault? he asks. He should have counted the cost. He was offered, we are assured, because He willed it Himself. Why does He now complain?

But His Blessed Mother would answer for Him: Oh, blame Him not. My Son Jesus is offered, true, because He willed it. But how could He not will it? He sees the children created by His Eternal Father perishing for ever. He hears the children of His own Father weeping and waiting for ever in the prison house of Lucifer.

How can He do otherwise than will to offer Himself? For He loves His Father, and He loves men created by His Father, and because He loves, He delivers Himself up for men.

Nor does He now repent, nor does He complain. The cost He has well counted. All the agony of this hour He foreknew perfectly when a Child in my arms. He does not repent, He does not complain; He suffers. His Human Body and, His Human Soul—they are suffering; but all the while His whole Heart and His whole Soul, and all His strength are crying out: *Father, Thy will be done*.

K. The legions of the blessed angels are also watching in silent wonder the spectacle in the Grotto. They are not accusing their King of having rashly encountered trouble of which He has not measured the length, the depth, the height, the breadth. No, as the Jews said when they saw Jesus weeping at the grave: *Behold, how He loved him*: so now, the choirs of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and the archangels and angels as they watch the tears of blood trickling down on the ground, and all the distress of His Sacred Body, and all the agony of His

Most Holy Soul, in words of most reverent rapture cry: Behold, how He loves man! Behold, the worth of man for whom He pays such a price! And they understand more clearly than ever how precious in the eyes of their God is the soul of man committed to their guardianship, and they bless their God for trusting them with that commission.

L. *His sweat became as drops of Blood.*

And now—is Holy Mary too much absorbed in her grief to turn to us and say a word to us while we kneel beside her? No, surely, for her heart is like her Son's. He, throughout His Passion, is mindful of His disciples; and she, however deep the sword of sorrow is piercing, will still think, with all her Mother's pity, of her children.

M. What word, then, does she say to us?

1. She says from her full and overflowing heart: My children, *see how He loved you.*

2. She says, after long silence and many heavy sighs and many tears: My children, know your worth, for *you are bought with a great price.*

3. She says again, after long prayer for us—in union with the prayer of her Jesus and our Jesus—she says most earnestly and most kindly: *Forget not the kindness of thy Surety (Ecclus. xxix.). Put (Him) as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm (Cant. viii.).*

4. Lastly, full of a Mother's tender solicitude, she adds: My children, look on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; *think diligently on Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself (from the unseen sinners, the wicked spirits) that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin (Hebrews xii.).*

N. *You have not yet resisted unto blood. The kingdom of Heaven, our Lord said, suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away (St. Matt. xi.).* We are soldiers, and we stand in presence of three determined enemies, *the last of the flesh, the last of the eyes, the pride of life.* In other words, our warfare is against the world and the flesh, aided by all the

cunning and trickery of Satan. *Put ye on the armour of God, St. Paul writes. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places (Ephes. vi.).* Soldiers in presence of strong enemies do not expect to win the battle with feeble wishes. Neither must we be surprised if a few faint-hearted prayers which we ourselves scarcely expect to be heard, cannot decide the day for us. *Thou art a man of desires, our Lady's Archangel said to Daniel, God's faithful servant. The holy saints knew that their Master prayed with a loud cry and with tears, and even with tears of blood. If sin is still mastering us, we have the explanation: You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* A man says sometimes: My passions are too strong for me! and he blames God for creating him with passions. He forgets that after the Fall our Creator had to change His plans. He has in His infinite charity formed a new plan by which all that was lost can be regained, and more. But in this new plan it is an essential part that we fight a good fight, and those that are brave and resolute never find their passions too strong for them; nor yet the devil, who is essentially cowardly. *Resist the devil, and he will fly from you.*

O. *Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

Holy writers ask this question: Wherefore did our Lord pray to His Father for help, seeing that He is God equal to the Father, and seeing, moreover, that all power is given to Him even as Man? Thy answer that from the moment of His Incarnation, His fixed purpose is to depend wholly on His Father's will. Whatever power He may have, still, *In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My Heart (Psalm xxxix.). As far as the east is from the west, He casts from Him every kind of solace and relief, save what His Father wishes to provide for Him. He knows how His Eternal Father feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies; and He never for a moment*

forgets that to His Father He is more, infinitely more, than they.

P. Another question asked by devout and diligent students of the Sacred Passion is this: How far is the prayer of our Lord in the Grotto heard and granted?

They answer (1) that His prayer is heard as far as He Himself wishes it to be heard. When He prayed beside the grave of Lazarus, He said to His Father: *I know that Thou hearest Me always*. And to St. Paul it was revealed, *that when in the days of His flesh with a strong cry and tears He offered up prayer, He was heard for His reverence* (Hebrews v.).

For His reverence: that is, either on account of the humble reverence with which he prayed; or because of the reverence due to His dignity and His holiness. All the absolute and unconditional prayers of our Lord are therefore heard.

But it has been already explained, how when a Senate or Synod presents a petition to a Sovereign or to the Pope, the petition is the wish or prayer of the majority, in which the minority also acquiesce; but certain wishes of the well-regulated and loyal minority are not pressed or urged. So in our Lord's case. His absolute prayer, which is heard and granted, is the cry of His charity. The cry of His fear and heaviness, is, as it were, the cry of the most loyal and right-minded minority, which is not urged. It is not an absolute wish, only conditional: *If it can be done, let this chalice pass from Me*.

Q. Three wishes, therefore, or inclinations, as we have seen, are in our Lord's Heart.

1. The wish of His natural fear, that shrinks from death.

2. The wish of His sensitive nature, which shrinks from the horrors that are to accompany His Death.

3. The wish of His charity, that His Father's will may be accomplished perfectly, and that His Passion may not be fruitless in the souls of men.

The first and second conditional wishes are not accomplished; but the Archangel sent to strengthen Him, assures Him that His third wish shall have ample fulfilment, and that His Father's will shall be entirely accomplished; that His Father shall be glorified in every detail of the Passion; that neither men nor wicked spirits shall prevail in any one single point against the will of His Father; that His Passion shall bring forth most abundant fruit; for *if He shall lay down His life, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand*.

R. St. Ignatius recommends us to dwell sometimes, while we contemplate, on this thought: "This is all for me". We must try to believe more and more firmly this great truth, which arms us well against all hopeless thoughts, and enkindles the fire of love.

(a) *All this contrition is for me and for my sins*. How far short, then, my contrition is of what it should be!

Blessed Mother of sorrows, pray for me now and at the hour of my death, that I may see clearly, while I look on the agony of thy Son, the truth of that word: *Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God* (Jerem. ii.). Alas! I knew not what I was doing. I know not yet how evil and how bitter a thing my sin was. I sinned and said: *What harm hath befallen me?* I sinned, and how little as yet have I realised the force of those words far more applicable to me than to the Jews: *Is this the return that thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not He thy Father that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?* (Deut. xxxii.).

According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, O Lord, blot out my sins. For I will declare my iniquity and will think for my sins (Psalm xxxviii.).

(b) *All this contrition is for me*, to be added to mine. Therefore, when I go to the sacred tribunal, I have something better to rely upon than my own feeble act of contrition. Jesus Christ, my Surety, my Saviour, is



uniting all His great contrition with my most insufficient sorrow.

*S. Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

St. Ignatius also wishes us to draw from contemplation on the Life and Death of our Lord an increase of love for Him and affectionate devotion towards Him.

St. Bernard writes: "More than all else does the chalice which Thou didst drink render Thee lovable to us. This easily and entirely wins to itself our love. It is the mystery which most surely attracts our devotion; most justly claims it; holds it clasped most closely; and most ardently inflames it."

*T. Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

*Look and do according to the pattern.* Before we leave the Grotto, let us gather together from our Blessed Lord's example a few lessons as to how we ought to pray.

1. *He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed* (St. Mark xiv.).

*Before prayer prepare thy soul* (Ecclus. xviii.): so is it said to us. What better preparation than humble reverence, reverential humility? Therefore we must try to enter on prayer with great reverence and humility.

St. Francis Borgia, beginning his prayer, used to put himself in spirit at the feet of Judas, till he remembered that our Lord had been there; and then he set about looking for some other place more suited to his unworthiness.

Some pious persons always prepare for prayer by a hearty act of contrition for their sins.

(a) St. Ignatius directs us all, when praying in private, to make, at the distance of a pace or two from our place of prayer, some act of external reverence and humiliation, before we go into the Divine presence.

Some, before they begin their prayer, surround themselves in spirit with a group of poor sinners, to remind themselves that they belong to the number.

(b) Our Blessed Lord advises us when we are called to a feast to make for the lowest seats. Prayer is conversa-

tion with God, and becomes a true feast, if God makes Himself known to us. Wise, then, are they who place themselves low down on the last seat at the beginning of their prayer.

(c) If we find ourselves discontented because we have no sensible consolation, is not this a sign that we took too high a position when we began prayer?

(d) How came the pagan centurion to say so wisely: *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter into my house?* If we have abused many great graces we have more cause than this centurion had to humble ourselves exceedingly.

(e) How did St. Peter so soon, in the beginning of his training, learn to say so becomingly: *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man?*

(f) Preparing for prayer, and still more for Holy Communion, should we not make time to say attentively and earnestly and perseveringly: *Whence is this to me that my Lord should come to me?* and converse with me?

2. *He saith: Abba, Father.* Holy Job, when suffering desolation, said: *O God, I cry to Thee and Thou hearest me not. I stand up, and Thou dost not regard me. Thou art changed to be cruel towards me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou art against me* (c. xxx.). These words give us only a faint idea of the weight of God's displeasure under which the desolate Soul of Jesus lies crushed; and yet all the while hope and confidence is unshaken. *Abba, Father!* is the cry of His Heart. The firm assurance that God Who is chastising Him is His most loving Father, never wanes, never grows dim.

(a) So must we come to prayer with great hope. *If any man want wisdom, let him ask: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*

(b) Prayer ought to ascend like a sweet-smelling incense. *Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight* (Psaln cxl.). If hope is wanting, dark smoke remains, but the fragrance is gone.

(c) Above all things God wants us to believe that He is a true Father. To the stiff-necked Jews, ever rebellious, He says : *Therefore at the least from this time call to Me, Thou art my Father* (Jerem. iii.)

We cannot too earnestly, or too often, cry from our hearts : *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name*. "May we all believe much more vividly in Thy Name of Father."

(d) And surely we ought also to find time to say : "Lord Jesus, hallowed be Thy name of Saviour and Redeemer. May we all have grace to believe firmly that Thy Sacred Wounds cry louder than our sins."

(e) St. Chrysostom would have the poor sinner say to God, "My Father, I have cast away all the feelings of a son ; but Thou canst not cast away the thoughts of a Father".

### 3. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou.

This word is omnipotent in prayer. When from our hearts we wish God's will to be done rather than ours, we fill Him with a grateful and intense desire to do our will if it may be.

(a) We take delight in the Lord when we make such a prayer lovingly : and His promise is, *Take delight in the Lord and He will give thee the requests of thy heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it* (Psalm xxxvi.).

### 4. And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.

In how many different ways has our Lord impressed upon us that we must persevere in prayer ? Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you : *Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth : and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened* (St. Luke xi.).

## SCENE IV.

THE STONE BY THE GROTTO. THE THREE DISCIPLES.

### STATION I.

OUR LORD'S FIRST VISIT TO THEM.

*And He cometh to His disciples and findeth them asleep* (St.

Matt. xxvi.).

*And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. Our Lord has trained His disciples to do for God what so many men do for the world, that is, to walk *hard ways* ; to toil by day and watch by night. They are not men *clothed in soft garments and feasting sumptuously every day*.

*The fulness of the rich*, the Holy Spirit tells us, *will not suffer him to sleep*. But, "Sleep is sweet to the labouring man". These disciples are men of labour, who are weary at night and ready for sleep. But now, moreover, weariness of soul is added to fatigue of body. *He found them sleeping for sorrow*. For nature is glad to forget her troubles for a while in sleep, and awakes with a heavy heart when a day of sorrow is coming.

B. *When He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples*.

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour interrupting His earnest prayer, raising up His wasted and weary Body slowly and with difficulty from the ground. Follow Him in spirit as He walks feebly and with uncertain steps up the incline to the mouth of the Grotto, and then up the steep, rough path towards the stony bed where His disciples are sleeping. Pale, very pale, is His sacred face. *His aspect is hidden*. The grace and beauty that was there till now is hidden under haggard disfigurement. We wonder as we watch Him making this effort when so exhausted.

Alas ! how often has a small measure of fatigue hindered us from going to converse with God in prayer, or to do

some work for Him ! But weariness does not hinder God from coming to man to care for him.

C. *He rose up from prayer.*

We are surprised, too, to see Him break off His prayer—such a prayer, on which so much depends, and at such an hour, too, when help from Heaven is so sorely needed.

But does He interrupt His prayer ? How can He, if He teaches us to pray always ?

But even if He did, what wonder were it that He Who has come out from the bosom of His Father to be with men, breaks off converse with His Father to go to men, to take care of His weak disciples, as a mother would rise at night to nurse her sick child !

D. *He cometh to His disciples.*

*Stay you here and watch with Me, He said to them an hour ago.*

An hour ago ! Oh, what an hour ! For them it has been a short hour. But for Him, which of us can measure the long minutes of that hour ? St. Peter tells us what was revealed to him concerning time. *Of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years.* The sorrows, the sadness, the heaviness of heart, the desolation of many generations to come have been crowded into that hour in the Grotto. *He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him* (Isaiah liii.).

And as, a few days ago, He came to the fig-tree, hoping, as it were, against hope, in His extreme exhaustion, to find a little refreshment there, so now He comes, bowed down with sorrow, carrying upon Him the sins of the world, and hoping against hope to find a little solace from the compassion of His chosen disciples ; and oh, how grateful would He be to those beloved ones if He had found them watching and remembering Him ! Contemplate Him as He stands looking down on the sleepers, His sensitive Heart feeling most keenly His disappoint-

ment. For weeping He hath wept in the night, and His tears are on His cheeks ; there is none to comfort Him among all that were dear to Him (Lament. i.).

E. *He found them sleeping.*

Disappointed He is, but not angry. When all shall be ended, He shall judge these three disciples, and He will not remember that they slept during His trouble ; He will only remember that they remained with Him in His temptation, and that, if they slept, it was through sorrow caused by following Him.

#### STATION II.

*And He saith to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou ? What, couldst thou not watch one hour with Me ?* (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Mark xiv.).

A. *Simon, sleepest thou ?* "Hast thou forgotten how one hour ago thy love was so strong that thou couldst go to prison with Me and thou couldst die with Me ? Canst thou, then, even now sleep, during My Agony, when My need is so great ?"

B. *Simon, sleepest thou ?*

"After My warning that Satan is desiring to riddle thee, canst thou sleep quietly in presence of such an adversary ?"

C. *Simon, sleepest thou ?*

"After thou hast heard from My lips that thou shalt be scandalised in Me this night ? When all our close intimacy and loving friendship is about to be shaken, and dashed to pieces, canst thou sleep so deep a sleep ?"

D. *Simon, sleepest thou ?*

"Hast thou no ears to hear when I said to thee once and again : *This night before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice ?*

"After such a foretelling, was there no need of thought and prayer to avert such ruin ? Was there nothing to do but to sleep ?"

All this and more our Saviour might with justice have

said. Oh, let us note attentively how His meek Heart is content with one gentle word: *Simon, sleepest thou?*

E. *O vos omnes*—"Oh, all you who pass by the way heedless," stay here to look at the disciples of Jesus sleeping. For the Holy Spirit is saying as we gaze: *What is that that hath been? The same thing that shall be! The children of this world are more prudent than the children of light. They do not slumber and sleep when great danger is nigh, "but Thy disciples, Lord Jesus, do". Who is blind, He asks, when temptation and sin and ruin is near, but My servant? Who is deaf, but he to whom I have sent My messengers, to warn them that enemies are near? Who is blind, but the servant of the Lord?* (Isaiah xlii.).

Every one else watches in the night when the house-breakers are near.

F. *Simon, sleepest thou? Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

The one great and lifelong hope of every good Christian is that he will be permitted to spend his eternity with Christ Jesus.

And yet, even His own chosen ones, His special friends and familiars, cannot watch with Him in His hour of trouble; for *the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth on many things* (Wisdom ix.).

Holy men and women who have begun to know Jesus Christ, and have tasted and seen that *the Lord is sweet* (Psalm xxxiii.), take care to be abstemious, lest the pampered body should become, more than need be, *a load upon the soul*. They even grudge their bodies the necessary food and repose; and one of their earnest prayers is: *From my necessities, deliver me, O Lord* (Psalm xxiv.).

St. Ignatius holds it to be a fundamental principle of the Gospel that we are bound to use all creatures, such as money and time and food and sleep and the rest, honestly, as means, as helps to the work we have to do for God. We are created for God; *all other things are created to help*

*us to praise God, to reverence Him and to serve Him.* Hence diet, as all other things, ought to be so regulated that it shall help the soul to pray and to work; and not press down too much the mind that museth on many things.

G. *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

How new, how startling, how cogent this appeal becomes to us, now that our most loving Saviour is living close to us in the tabernacle, in order to be near us and ever ready for us! *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*—He says to us, most meekly indeed and humbly from His tabernacle, but also most earnestly and urgently; for He sees how greatly we need to watch and pray. Well He knows how all the powers of darkness are busy night and day, to prevent that honour, that reverence, that ardent love to which His littleness in the tabernacle and the *almighty weakness of His goodness* so well entitles Him. The theatres and ball-rooms and concert-halls are studiously made most brilliant and attractive that they may lure away Christian men and women from the Sanctuary of the Blessed Sacrament. The old ways of dealing with unseen wicked spirits are revived, and new ones invented, to turn men's minds away from communion with their Hidden God, and with His Blessed Mother, and His saints and angels.

H. *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

Before we turn away and reject this modest petition of Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, let us reflect once more on the triumphant jeering of the wicked spirits as they go about on their rounds of malice and blasphemy. *On a certain day, we read in the Book of Job, when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, Satan also was present among them. And the Lord said to him: Whence comest thou? And he answered and said: I have gone round about the earth and walked through it* (Job i.). From the context we gather that Satan was there to boast that he has been in every part of the world, and has everywhere found that God is

neglected by the men whom He created to replace the fallen angels, and that he, Satan, is supreme master. The malicious exultation of this enemy of God and men is a thousand times greater now when he can persuade men to neglect and ignore Jesus Christ in His tabernacle, the prison of His love; and to cover Him with dishonour and opprobrium.

Grateful, therefore, most grateful, is His meek and humble Heart to those who take a little trouble to solace Him by being present at Holy Mass, and finding some time to watch with Him.

I. *Simon, sleepest thou?*

Judas can watch by night to gain his thirty pieces of silver. The Priests and Ancients can watch to work out the design of their envy. Children of the world watch readily for pleasure or for money. "For Thee alone, my God, I am unwilling to watch." *Tibi soli peccavi.*

### STATION III.

*Watch ye and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* (St. Matt. xxvi. 41).

This is the warning word of vital importance which our Lord has come from the Grotto to speak to the three disciples and to all of us. For we are all present to His Heart; and to each of us He says: Even if the mother can forget her child, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands (Isaiah xlix.).

A. *Watch and pray.*

Because He speaks mildly, we forget the infinite earnestness with which He is uttering this admonition: *Watch and pray.* We must ever keep in mind the principle, "*Non in commotione Dominus*" (3 Kings xix.), that is to say, the Lord does not always visit us in earthquakes and whirlwinds. He is not like a short-lived, weak, and fearful man, who acts and speaks in haste and anger, because he is conscious how small his power is and how short his

time. The eternal and all-powerful God has no need to be in a hurry, or nervously excited. *Thou being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favour dispossest of us, for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.). He judges and speaks with tranquillity; but every word has, according to our way of expressing ourselves, been weighed and considered from eternity; and therefore, whenever we hear a word from Him, surely we ought not to harden our hearts.

B. *Watch and pray.*

If the word He spoke, *Let there be light*, had been by some malicious power rendered void, who can calculate the loss and the detriment and the confusion that would have followed? If these words, *This is My Body; This is My Blood; Thy sins are forgiven; Lazarus, come forth*, could fall to the ground baffled and blighted and ineffectual, who can measure the calamity and ruin?

Yet there is no word that comes from the mouth of God that is not unspeakably precious, as these words are. Alas, we fools! we heed not the words of our Lord Jesus, infinitely wise, infinitely loving, and all-powerful, because He speaks to us in kindness and in tranquillity.

C. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

Had St. Peter through that one hour watched with his Master, how many bitter tears of anguish, and how many hours and nights of painful lamentation might he have been spared! True, indeed, in his case, the inventive love of his Master found out a means of changing his sin by loving contrition into a glorious ornament of heavenly glory. But in our case, how good and prudent an economy it is to prevent sin by watching one hour, rather than to have to lament sin through many long hours of bitter remorse; and then to begin again lamenting and crying out: *Wash me yet more, O Lord.*

D. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

Pious persons are sometimes tempted to think that

they gain no good by going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion. Never till Judgment comes shall we know how many times we have escaped entering into temptation by having been present at Holy Mass, or by having received Holy Communion.

In certain conditions of spiritual health, when a man's virtue is weak, and habits of sin have long prevailed, we may predict with tolerable certainty that if he perseveres in attending Holy Mass and approaching to Holy Communion regularly and frequently, he will abide in the grace of God; but if he omits through sloth to strengthen himself with the Bread of Heaven, he will relapse very soon into grievous sin.

So, too, with our regular daily prayers: if we are faithful to them, the day goes on happily according to God's ordinance; but if we will not watch a little time with our Lord, we fall into many venial sins of the tongue, or sins of thought. The Prophet asks: *What is the meaning that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?* (Jerem. xi.). The answer is: We did not pray, and therefore entered into temptation.

*E. Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

It is wonderful to observe with what diligence Satan labours to induce us, if we will not abandon prayer entirely, at least to put off and delay our prayers. What does he gain by this? Two great advantages:—

1. In the first place, Christ is dishonoured. It is a great confusion indeed to a father of a family to find that to his wife and children every one else is more welcome than he is; that all others are quickly attended to, but he left to the last. So, too, does it give great contentment to the malice of Lucifer, when he can so easily persuade us to write a letter first, or read a book, or prolong a conversation, and not till later on, perchance not till the last drowsy moments before bed-time, say hurriedly the unwelcome prayer to our God.

2. Besides this, Satan knows well that a prayer said

early and in good time prevents sin; but a prayer said later on oftentimes only laments sin. It is a homely proverb but a true one, even in spiritual life, that "a stitch in time saves nine".

F. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

But how if even the spirit be not willing? Then assuredly we must pray much more till we find ourselves in *carefulness not slothful, in spirit fervent, serving the Lord* (Romans xii.).

And when through earnest prayer we find ourselves thus fervent in spirit, then we must still pray and not faint: knowing that even when *the spirit is willing, the flesh is (very) weak*; and needs much more strengthening before we can be *doers of the law*.

STATION IV.

*And going away again, He prayed* (St. Mark xiv. 39).

A. Tranquilly but most earnestly He has spoken the necessary word; and He goes back to pray—to pray for these three loved ones, and not for them only, but for us too, and for all men. For of our Saviour it is written: *He began to do and to teach*. If then He teaches us to pray lest we enter into temptation, we may be quite sure that He prays with infinite zeal for us that we may not enter into temptation.

"*Misericordiae Domini quia non sumus consumpti*"—*The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed; because His commiserations have not failed!* (Lament. iii.). If our Blessed Lord were not always living to intercede for us, if every time we forget ourselves, and neglect to help ourselves, He also could forget us, long ago we should have been consumed.

STATION V.

*And He cometh again, and findeth them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

*And when He returned, He found them again asleep (for their eyes were heavy), and they knew not what to answer Him (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. In his dream, Jacob saw a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending by it; and the Lord leaning upon the ladder.

This represents the work of our Guardian Angels ever coming from God to us, and from us going back to God. And so we see in the lives of apostolic saints that they go from prayer to work, and from work to prayer.

The angels and saints learn their wise practice from what we see here. Our Saviour is God-Man and the Man-God. He is one Person with two Natures. Both natures are now His, both dear to Him beyond all price. For ever, therefore, according to our human language, His Heart turns from His Father to His little flock, and then, from men, His brethren, back to His Eternal Father.

He is the Mediator, the never-tiring "Go-between," reconciling God our Father with men, and men with God our Father.

*Quarens me sedisti lassus,  
Tantus labor non sit cassus.*

*Wearily He sought for me,  
May His toil not fruitless be.*

B. *He findeth them sleeping.*

We complain sometimes that we pray and that no answer comes. Little we know how often our Lord comes to give us the answer in abundant graces, and finds us sleeping and incapable of hearing Him or speaking to Him.

C. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

Our Lord awakes them because He is truly and earnestly desirous that they should watch and pray, and so avert coming danger.

But if so, some one might ask, why does He not do something that shall startle them and rouse them, and render them wide awake and on the alert? In this, as in

a thousand times a thousand other instances, we see how our God does, meekly and with tranquillity, enough to help us—enough and much more than enough—but at the same time will not, beyond a certain point, interfere with natural causes and with our free-will. *The earth He has given to the children of men.* They are the managers in this world, and God suggests to them, and counsels them, and gives them all help most willingly, but treats them and all their rights most delicately.

Again, when we are considering the action of our God, we must always remember that word of our Lord: *Trade till I come.* God is, we may say, limited and restricted in giving graces by the fact, that for reasons infinitely wise, holy, and charitable, we are created to *trade*, to *earn by our own industry the increase of grace.* St. Paul has expressed this truth in this word: *He who soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly. He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap in blessings* (2 Cor. ix.).

D. *He findeth them sleeping.*

We do not gather that our Lord did more this time than awaken them. No words of His are recorded.

So it is, when our Lord has spoken to us already sufficiently and clearly, and we do not listen, charity sometimes compels Him to grow silent, lest we abuse more grace.

Then, again, when He finds us drowsy and indisposed to listen, He is silent, and goes away to wait for a better moment. How patiently He waited for the long-desired hour when Augustine would at last listen to Him! Then at length He spoke and poured into his now docile soul all the accumulation of graces which his faithful mother, St. Monica, had been storing up during so many years of prayers and tears.

E. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

"*Attendite.*" Stay a little while watching the distressed state of the disciples, not knowing what to answer to their Master. They are awake enough to know that they have

not carried out His injunction, but still are oppressed with their heaviness of heart and drowsy sadness.

Look attentively at the picture; for it is only a picture, a faint image of what is to come. *What shall I do, we may well ask with holy Job, when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him if He is then compelled to say to me: Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is He not thy Father that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?* (Deut. xxxii.).

F. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

And what shall I answer, if I have not loved my Saviour, when I hear all the blessed saying, "Amen, amen, *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*"?

G. What shall I answer, if I find myself classed with those who are saying: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved?* (Jerem. viii.).

H. What shall I answer, when before all creation it is made evident that *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*, but all in vain, if I never loved Him in return?

I. What shall I answer, when I find out that throughout my lifetime, every day and every night, He was for me imprisoned in the tabernacle, wishing to become my food, and to be to me my faithful, my own God?

J. What shall I answer, when it is made clear to me that His Mother was also my compassionate Mother?

K. What shall I answer when I see it in a blaze of light that even when I was in the depths of my sins, had I been only merciful to other poor sinners there would have been mercy in abundance for me?

A writer on the Sacred Passion who has diligently collected old traditions, tells us that after the second visit of our Lord, the disciples did not lie down any more, but sat with their knees bent; but that still, even in that position, they were overcome by sleep.

## STATION VI.

*And leaving them, He went again, and He prayed the third time* (St. Matt. xxvi. 44).

A. Let us contemplate our suffering Saviour going now for the third time with feeble and faltering steps down this steep and rugged path back to the Grotto of Agony.

*What is man, human advisers would say to Him, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou dost visit him?*

Why continue this thankless task of saving men, when Thy own chosen ones, trained and schooled by Thy own care, make so little response to all Thy love?

His answer has long ago been given. *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the child of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I FORGET* (Isaiah xlix.). Of the very best father and mother on this earth, our Lord said: *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven!* (St. Luke xi.).

*Sussum corda.* From all that we see then in this world of strong parental love, and the devotedness of friends, let us conjecture, a little, at least, what the love of our Lord must be towards us. The workman is much better than his work. If parental love is so consoling and beautiful to behold, the Creator of loving parents is more beautiful than they. *By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby* (Wisdom xiii.).

*Leaving them He went again.*

B. *What is man that Thou art mindful of him, Lord Jesus?* Why toil, why go painfully backwards and forwards seeking to win me? Holy Church says: *Quærens me sedisti lassus.* Thou wert travelling in search of me when Thou didst sit down weary by the well. But here Thou art seeking me, and never sitting down to rest; seek-



ing me painfully and returning back to pray for me in agony.  
 "May Thy toil not fruitless be."

"Holy Mother of God, show us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, that all His labour for us may not be in vain."  
*O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His name together. Come ye to Him to be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded* (Psalm xxxiii.).

C. *And leaving them He went again, and He prayed the third time.*

See how the meekness of our Redeemer conquers by enduring. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* In the end He will succeed, and will gather these disciples, and through them many more, to His Heart; and the fire that He came to cast on the earth will from His Heart enter theirs. A Heart less loving than His might be tired out when its own chosen ones seem to refuse to listen, *like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the wizard that charneth wisely* (Psalm lviii.). But our Saviour Jesus ever does what He teaches. *Be not overcome by evil; but overcome evil by good* (Romans xii.). *If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink* (Proverbs xxv.). *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you; pray for those that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.).

It was one of the three who are sleeping here, that said ere now to his Master: *Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.*

And if our God will have us thus be so good to enemies, and if He Himself is abundantly patient and gentle with malicious enemies, how immeasurably more compassionate will He be with His own, who are not in malice, but only overcome by infirmity! *If Thou didst punish Thy enemies with so great deliberation, giving them time and place whereby they might be changed from their wickedness, with what circumspection hast Thou judged Thy own children!* (Wisdom xii.).

# MOUNT MORIAH. THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE. THE ROMAN BARRACKS.

*Judas also who betrayed Him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples* (St. John xviii. 2).

A. A few weeks later St. Peter, rising up in the midst of the brethren—the number of persons was about a hundred and twenty—told them that Judas was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus (Acts i.).

For this reason, among others, *the enemies of a man are they of his own household* (Michæas vii.), because those who live in his house know all his habits, and his secrets, and his weak points where he is vulnerable. They who live with us day by day generally know us well; so much so that commonly from their judgment of us we may conjecture reasonably what our sentence will be at the judgment seat of Christ.

Judas, therefore, knows our Lord's secrets. The Priests and Ancients, though they have watched Him so narrowly, and issued strict order, that all who know His place of abode shall give information, yet evidently know nothing; and are helpless, till Judas comes to be their guide.

As the Roman Prætorium stood on Mount Moriah, immediately to the north of the Temple, and adjoining to it; most probably the Priests and Rulers, who wanted to have help from the Roman garrison, had given orders to their servants and retainers to assemble in the outer court of the Temple, called the Court of the Gentiles. Here, moreover, they are much nearer to the place which Judas has named as the resort of Jesus, than they would be at the Palace of the Priests. Here, then, on Mount Moriah, not more than two hundred yards distant from the Garden of Gethsemani, they are actively making preparations.

B. Watch the magnitude of these hostile preparations: *For wickedness is fearful.* The Rulers think that they cannot

take precautions enough to secure Jesus, Who has escaped out of their hands so often.

*A great multitude with swords and clubs—with lanterns, torches, and weapons.* If these clubs are like what the peasants of the country are seen carrying in the present day, the swords might well be dispensed with. The Jews were notoriously bold in battle, and merciless; and an enemy struck by the heavy knob at the end of the clubs would scarcely need a second blow to end his life. As the Romans had taken away the power of life and death, and as the Rulers were anxious that the people should believe that the death of Jesus is the work of the Romans, it may be that on this account they did not arm their servants with swords, but only with clubs and staves.

C. Consider Judas in his new position of leader and captain. Mark how he is despised and mistrusted and narrowly watched lest he should play false and escape; and is made to understand that it will go ill with him if he prove a traitor to his new masters as he has done to Jesus. But still he is the leader, and he is obeyed when he urges them to make preparation diligently. Always hoping to earn a larger pay, he is exaggerating the importance of his services. He is quite sure, so he tells them, that to take Jesus will be a far more difficult enterprise than it was for the Philistines to secure Samson. Though the moonlight is bright, yet he insists that there must be an ample provision of torches and lanterns, as he knows the ground well. Besides the dark woods there are very many caverns and grottoes, where Jesus may easily hide Himself and escape.

From the walls that skirt the Temple area on the east, Judas can point out the Garden accurately to the Priests and Ancients; and with the Roman officers plan the midnight attack. He knows every detail; how many disciples Jesus will probably have with Him, and what amount of resistance they may make. They are all determined men and strong, and resolved to die with their

Master. Simon, the chief man, is especially daring. No precaution can be too great. His own life especially will be in the utmost danger. Beyond all doubt, he is badly paid for the risk he is running. The Romans pledge themselves to make short work both of Master and disciples if there be any resistance. In any case the Priests and Ancients are resolved that His disciples must be made prisoners with their Master, and reserved for heavy chastisement. Unhappy men! *They devise vain things. There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

The undertaking then is made to appear so difficult, and the chances that Jesus will make His escape so great, that though the Priests have got together a large number of servants and followers, armed with clubs, and equipped with lanterns and torches, and though they have also at their command the body of police known as the Temple guard, yet all this does not suffice. They must have help from the hated Romans; and by representing the great importance of the enterprise, and the exceedingly dangerous power and influence of Jesus the Nazarene, and the great probability of a seditious rising of the multitudes now gathered in Jerusalem, they secure the services of a Roman cohort.<sup>1</sup>

Some judicious commentators think that the cohort mentioned by St. John would probably not consist of less than five hundred or six hundred men. To us it may seem incredible that such a force should be set in motion, to secure one prisoner. But we must remember that word of wisdom already quoted: *Wickedness is fearful*. The Jewish Rulers are strained to the highest pitch, and are in a fever of malicious desire to see Jesus dead, and in extreme terror that He will escape.

They know, moreover, how much the people are devoted

<sup>1</sup> "*Cohors ergo et Tribunus*" (St. John xviii. 12). Some writers, however, think that these words do not necessarily mean a Roman cohort; though the names, Cohort and Tribune, ordinarily belong to the Roman army.

to Him, and how easily they may be moved to rise up on His behalf.

D. The question occurs, why they have put off His capture to such a late hour of the night?

They are not losing time willingly. It was already night when Judas came to the Palace of the Priests with the news that the convenient time is come. Then the Chief Priests have to despatch messengers to the other Priests, to the Ancients, to the Scribes and Pharisees, in order to gather together as large a body of servants and retainers as possible. After this, from their palace on Mount Sion to the Temple area and the Roman barracks, they have a walk of half an hour. Arrived at the Prætorium, they have to spend time in persuading the incredulous and scornful Romans that there is a necessity for calling out the Roman Guards. The necessary permission is perchance not easily obtained at this time of the night. Despite, therefore, all their eager haste, the silent hours are passing rapidly, and the midnight is drawing near before all their preparations are ready. The hour, as well as the place, has been selected by God's providence. *According to Thy ordinance*, O God, this holy night is going on.

E. It is the opinion of some holy writers that the Incarnation took place at midnight. A tradition to this effect may have been known to them; or they may have based their opinion on the words of Wisdom applied by Holy Church to the Divine Infant: *While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from Heaven from Thy royal Throne* (Wisdom xviii.). It is also thought that at midnight Jesus was born. At the same hallowed hour it is convenient that He should give Himself into the hands of His enemies.

F. We may be sure that the Rulers do not wish for any useless delay. No doubt they are well content that the people should be sunk in deep sleep when they set out to arrest Jesus: for, as we remember, the Evangelists record how in their Council held two days ago, in the court of

Caiphas, while decreeing to put Jesus to death, they said expressly: *Not on the festival-day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people.*

But meanwhile, the traitor, their captain, is continually repeating to them the admonition given to himself. *That which* (you do) *do it quickly.* He knows the habits of Jesus well. If they make not haste, He will cross Mount Olivet to Bethany, and the work of capturing Him will become immeasurably more difficult, if not impossible. Doubtless, as the Garden is so close at hand, he has his scouts watching, who tell him that no party of twelve men have as yet left Gethsemani to cross the hill. He may even know that eight of them are still sleeping by the roadside near the bridge.

All the while he is walking *through hard ways.* In bitter vexation he is again gnashing his teeth to find that his new masters are paying a much larger bribe to induce the Roman captain to undertake this most unwelcome and degrading duty, than the wretched price so grudgingly promised, and not yet paid to him, for his great services.

What wonder that the Holy Spirit tells us that men engaged in such unholy work as this, if they go out of this world unrepentant, spend their eternity in that hopeless moan: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction: and have walked through hard ways. We fools! We fools! The serpent deceived me!*

## SCENE VI.

### THE GARDEN.

#### STATION I.

*And He cometh the third time, and saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough: the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners* (St. Mark xiv. 41).

A. *He cometh a third time.*

“Yes, three times, and seven times, and seventy times

seven times, and countless times beyond, compassionate Lord Jesus, Thou hast come to our souls, looking to see if there be some fruit on the barren tree, and then, at the prayers of Thy Blessed Mother and Thy saints, who are only echoing the pleading of Thy own Heart, Thou hast gone away to wait once more for a better time." We know that *Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

B. *He saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough.*

Commentators differ in their interpretation of these words.

1. Some think that when our Lord comes, His coming wakes the Apostles, and that thereupon He bids them sleep on, and take more rest; and waits by their side, Himself watching and praying, till the soldiers are near, and that then He says, *It is enough*, and with these words awakes them thoroughly.

2. But perhaps a more probable interpretation is, that when our Saviour arrives the third time, the Apostles have been waked up by the noise of the soldiers, who are beginning to march out from the Beautiful Gate, which is within bow-shot of the place where they have been sleeping.

The eight others who were left near the bridge, a little way to the south, have also, no doubt, heard the tumult, and seen the glare of torches on the hill, and are running in terror to the Garden, to seek protection at the side of their Master.

In this hour then Jesus says to the three, with such a holy irony as might come from His meek and tender Heart, *Sleep now, and take your rest*. That is, now, if you have heart to sleep, and courage to sleep, if you can sleep, and will sleep, you can take your rest. But immediately, dropping all irony, He adds, *It is enough*. You have slept enough, now you must rouse yourselves. Sleep is now at an end. *The hour is come*.

C. We must not fail to fix well in our remembrance how gracious all the time, and how patient He is. He does not say one word to upbraid them. He might have reminded them of the prophecy: *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and there was none* (Psalm lxxiii.). But His most compassionate Heart knows that already they are very sad; and the bruised reed He (never) will break (Isaiah xlii.).

*He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust* (Psalm cii.). St. Ignatius lays it down as a certain rule, that when we are trying earnestly to be faithful to our Lord, rough and discouraging words never come from Him to our souls, but from the father of lies.

D. *The hour is come; behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

What here seems to affect most the tender and sensitive Heart of our Saviour is, not what He is going to suffer from the soldiers and servants, but that He shall be betrayed.

"Attendite." Once again, dwell a little on that sentence, which His prophet spoke for Him. *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it. But thou, a man of one mind with Me, My friend and My familiar, who dost take sweet meats together with Me: in the house of God we walked with consent* (Psalm liv.).

How much more terrible to the Heart of our Lord a traitor is than an open enemy, who has never been a friend and a familiar!

We have all been on the footing of friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you (St. John xv.). *The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom*, Lord Jesus, *Thou hast made manifest to me* (Psalm l.). We have been admitted to the Table of our Lord to eat of the sweet meats with Him. Nay, much more than that. We have been allowed to become one with Him, by taking His Flesh to be our meat indeed,

and His Blood to be our drink indeed. Oh, how content the blessed souls in Purgatory are to prolong their time of contrition, for having betrayed here on earth the Lord Jesus, so *gracious* a God, so *merciful*, so *patient*, of so much *compassion*, and so *easy to forgive evil*.

E. *The hour is come : behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

*The hour is come.* When does that hour now come, when Jesus is betrayed into the hands of sinners? Alas! when does it not come? May it not come at any hour between the rising of the sun and the going down thereof, and again from the sunset to the dawn? For when is there an hour that the priest at the altar is not working the stupendous miracle of transubstantiation? When is there an hour when men, women, and children may not approach in crowds to receive as their food the true Body of Christ Jesus, and His Sacred Blood and His Soul and His Divinity? *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali.*

"May the Sacred Heart of our Lord cast more and more of His burning fire on this earth, that we may all be moved to make reparation for all the outrages offered to our hidden God."

## STATION II.

*Rise, let us go : behold, he is at hand who will betray Me*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 46).

A. *Rise, let us go.*

Till now, then, the disciples have been sitting: He has been standing.

*I am in the midst of you, He said this evening, as He that serveth.* So is it still. We are the masters. Our Lord Jesus waits on us, and is our servant.

We are created to serve the Lord, but in good truth, as His devout disciple has said, He serves us much more than we serve Him.

"O Jesus! O Son of Mary! O serving Man! O lowly

Servant of men! draw our hearts to the omnipotent weakness and lowliness of Thy goodness!"

B. *Behold, he is at hand who will betray Me.*

*He who will betray Me.* What a position! Man seeks for distinction and eminence. Mark how in the mind of our Lord, *he who will betray Me* stands prominent and foremost among thousands. The chosen Apostle, now degraded and outcast—*he who will betray Me*.

We are taught that certain sacraments imprint a character, a mark, a sign, which death does not efface, which all the fire of Hell does not burn out, which remains resplendent in Heaven throughout eternity. Any one who bears this mark, this badge, this character, if he dies a sinner, will throughout eternity be pointed out as one who betrayed Jesus.

C. *He is at hand.* By this time, we may suppose, the eight who had remained near the torrent have joined our Lord, and all the eleven stand gazing in great fear at the steep heights opposite, and so close to them, where the soldiers and the armed crowd are passing quickly through the gate, with lamps and torches in unnecessary abundance added to the moonlight.

D. *He is at hand.* The disciples are silent, utterly paralysed, their eyes fixed on the great crowd, and the glare of the torches rapidly drawing near. We are told that animals at night, when they hear the roar of the lion prowling, become motionless through fear, and cannot fly. But the suspense is very short. The traitor is at hand.

E. Yet let us not forget how easily our Lord could pass unseen with His disciples through the very midst of the armed multitude had it pleased Him to do so. *He is offered, He is made prisoner, solely and entirely because He willed it.*

## SCENE VII.

## THE MARCH TO GETHESEMANI.

*Judas therefore having received a band of soldiers, and from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees servants, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons (St. John xviii.).*

*As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the Twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs sent from the Chief Priests and the Ancients of the people (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And while He was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Ancients (St. Mark xiv.).*

*As He was yet speaking, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them (St. Luke xxii.).*

If we read attentively these different narratives, we gather these details.

1. That the *Chief Priests*, the *Ancients*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Scribes*, are all taking part in the war against the Lord, and against His Christ.

2. St. John, writing later than the other Evangelists, states a fact omitted by them, that in addition to the servants furnished by the Priests and Pharisees, Judas had received a band of soldiers, *apparently not provided by the Priests*; therefore, not merely the police of the Temple guard, but a cohort of Roman soldiers—a band of soldiers—and, from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees, servants.

3. St. John writes that *Judas received* these soldiers. From which we may see that he is taking the lead, that they are put under his orders, that probably he had gone with the Priests and Ancients to ask the Roman authorities for the use of the soldiers, and was himself the spokesman to represent the difficulties of the enterprise, and the necessity for a strong guard.

Some painters represent the traitor as a man more refined in appearance, and better dressed than the other Apostles. He was not a Galilean fisherman, as most of them were. He was a Jew of Judea, the only one among the Twelve, Judas of Kerioth. His ill-gotten money, perchance, enabled him to have better garments, and more culture, and more comforts than the others had.

A. On this holy night, then, Judas is placed in an unenviable prominence. He is holding a brief, short-lived authority and leadership. Possibly there are among the Priests and Ancients some who are envious of his pre-dence. In such cases we are often inclined to ask:

*Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why is it well with all them that transgress and do wickedly? (Jerem. xii.).* We have the answer in the 72nd Psalm. *When they were lifted up, Thou hast cast them down. How were they brought to desolation? They have suddenly ceased to be they have perished by reason of their iniquity (Psalm lxxii.).*

Each of us here has his short day of power and authority; but in this short day, by the way in which we use our power over our own Creator, we determine whether the long, the never-ending eternity, shall be for us happiness and life everlasting with our God, or slavery everlasting with Lucifer.

4. St. John is also the only Evangelist who mentions that the multitude of servants carried lanterns and torches.

5. Judas, as leader, and knowing the way, walks down the hill in front of the multitude. *Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them.*

6. While the crowd of servants have their clubs and lanterns and torches, the Roman soldiers have their swords, which they will most gladly use if there is any rising of the Jewish people, or any resistance. They had willingly, at Pilate's bidding, mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices (St. Luke xlii.); and if there were a prospect of cutting down some of the Jewish multitude, whom they despise, they would perchance be more content than they are now to give up their night's rest to go in pursuit of one foolish impostor from Nazareth.

B. The gate in the Eastern wall, which is nearest to Gethsemani, is the Shusan Gate, or Beautiful Gate, afterwards called Golden Gate. Through this gate, which, as we have seen, is opened during the Paschal solemnity, Judas leads the cohort and the armed multitude. Many of the Chief Priests and Ancients, as we shall afterwards see, are marching with the crowd, directing and urging them forward, and keeping a close eye on the traitor. He leads the way in

front, but close to him are the watchers appointed to see that he does not escape among the trees in the valley.

C. As the armed multitude pass through the Eastern Gate, through which, five days before, our Saviour rode in His humble triumph, the Priests and Ancients have some consolation for the chagrin they endured that day, while compelled to listen to the Hosannas of the people. "We shall soon see whether this time He comes blessed in the name of the Lord. Not many Hosannas will welcome Him to-night."

Under the guidance then of the traitor, who well knows the road, the Roman soldiers, followed by the armed multitude, need not more than a few minutes to march down the steep pathway from the Golden Gate to the Bridge. They cross the torrent and the high-road, and at once they are among the trees at the base of Mount Olivet, and close to the Garden of Gethsemani. The traitor points out the cave belonging to the Blessed Mother where Jesus is to be found. Thither they rapidly bend their steps, and now they have reached the sacred spot.

#### END OF THE SECOND NIGHT WATCH.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE THIRD NIGHT WATCH.

#### SCENE I.

#### GETHSEMANI. THE TRAITOR.

#### STATION I.

*Judas therefore having received a band of soldiers, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, lanterns and torches (St. John xviii. ; St. Matt. xxvi.).*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Let us stay a little while to contemplate this armed multitude hurrying eagerly to the holy Garden.

*Why, the Holy Spirit asks, why have the people devised vain things, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ ? (Psalm ii.).* What can be a more vain thing, more useless and superfluous, than this large armed force ? If Jesus is willing to deliver Himself up for us, troops are not needed. Abraham had no strong guard when he led Isaac to the mountain of sacrifice. This obedient son went whithersoever his father led. Of the times that are now coming, the happy days of Christ's reign on earth, the Prophet has foretold, that the wolf, the leopard, the calf, the kid, the sheep, shall all be so tame that *a little child shall lead them* (Isaiah xi.). Jesus, Who is here to-night, is the source and beginning, the author and the model of all this docility. As His hour is come, and He now wills to deliver Himself up, one little Jewish child would be enough to take Him prisoner and

lead Him as a *sheep to the slaughter*, as a lamb to the shearer.

B. *A great multitude with swords and clubs, lanterns and torches.*

Call to mind how vain and abortive all the plots and plannings of these Rulers and Ancients against Christ have hitherto proved. *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

They resolved that they must catch Him in His speech, and they set their best men to do this; but all in vain.

Again, after much deliberation they decreed that He is not to be arrested or slain on the festival-day; and, lo! on the festival-day He shall be arrested and put to death.

Moreover, with all prudence and caution they came to a resolution that nothing must be done that might excite a tumult of the people; and yet, here in the stillness of the midnight, is a tumultuous and disorderly rabble assembled, which will most surely disturb and excite the people if God's providence be not watching over their sleep.

And now, a large force is ready; much money has been paid for their services; the campaign is planned; all the positions are to be occupied where escape is possible; and an abundance of lanterns and torches have been secured by fair means and foul—for the hour is so critical, the danger so great, that they cannot afford to be scrupulous—all these preparations, however, all the plans, all the swords and clubs and lanterns and torches are utterly vain and superfluous. The light of the full moon is ample for all that is wanted.

Indeed, there is light far more than enough for these princes and rulers. For they who are doing evil hate the light, and must hate the light. He whom they are seeking with torches is the *Light of the world*. Little they think of that word which is written: *Darkness shall not be dark to Thee, Lord Jesus, and night shall be light as the day* (Psalm cxxxviii.).

There is no need at all that the soldiers be posted. Not one torch is wanted. For, as we remember, our Lord said a few minutes ago to His disciples: *Rise up, let us go; behold he that will betray Me is at hand*. And here at the gate of the Garden He now stands awaiting the traitor and the multitude; much more desirous of being a prisoner than they are to seize Him; and saying to His Father, *My Heart is ready, O God, My Heart is ready*.

#### STRATTON II.

*Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth* (St. John xviii. 4)

A. From the stone on which the three Apostles had been sleeping to the gate of the Garden the distance is only a few yards. As He walks thither, and stands expecting His enemies, let us devoutly watch and listen.

His step does not falter now. His limbs are not tottering. From His sacred face the traces of the Agony have passed away. He that gave leave to the storm to disturb His Sacred Soul, has with a secret injunction bidden the winds to be still, and there has come a *great tranquillity*.

Knowing quite well, as St. John writes, *all things that should come upon Him, He went forth*; tranquil and gracious, and beautiful above the sons of men, as a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber (Psalm xviii.). St. Jerome and others think that at this moment His Sacred Body appeared more than ordinarily beautiful and majestic.

B. *Jesus therefore went forth*.

When in after-times the Apostles look back upon this holy hour, and remember Him walking forth, full of grace and dignity, do they not say to one another: "Is not this the scene which the Prophet saw in his vision and said: *Who is this that cometh from Edom? with dyed garments from Bosra? this Beautiful One in His robe: walking in the greatness of His strength* (Isaiah lxiii.). When the three are



telling how haggard, how prostrate, how woe-begone He was during the Agony, the eight are incredulous: for they recollect how He walked forward to the gate in the greatness of His strength: *this Beautiful One in His robe.*

A short hour ago He was coming to Peter for a little comfort and sympathy. Now, when the Prophet asks: Who is this Beautiful One? he gets this answer: *I am a defender to save.* He is going forth now like a giant, glad to run on His way.

#### C. Jesus therefore went forth.

And as they continue afterwards to read the prophetic words: *Why then is Thy apparel red? and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press?* well they remember the large blood-stains on His dress which they notice to-night; and none but the Blessed Mother can give them any explanation of them. She can point out the solution in the word that follows: *I trod the wine-press alone.*

But, He was not alone, the eight will perhaps say to one another; Peter was with Him, James was with Him, John was with Him. But Simon Peter, with tears falling as he answers, says: I was with Him, true, but no comfort to Him. He came, and came again, and said, *Simon, sleepest thou?* Simon, watch and pray; but the prophetic word came true: *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me: but there was none* (Psalm lxviii.).

#### D. Jesus went forth.

As our Lord walks—the Beautiful One in His blood-stained robe, and in the greatness of His strength, "*Sursum corda!*" let us try to bring home to ourselves how infinitely beautiful He is in the eyes of His Eternal Father; how inebriably dear He is to His Holy Mother, and how the blessed angels plead for us, saying: O God, look on the face the beautiful face, of Thy Christ.

E. And as in contemplation we are often to reflect on ourselves, from the distress and depression of Christ Jesus during His Agony, let us call to mind how thoroughly

prostrate and helpless our souls seem to be when our God hides His face from us in time of desolation; and yet, if we follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit: *Wait on God with patience, join thyself to God and endure*: how we rise up from our painful prayer wonderfully strengthened, and full of hope!

#### STATION III.

*As He was yet speaking, behold, a multitude and he that was called Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them* (St. Luke xxii.). *And he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully* (St. Mark xiv.).

#### A. Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them.

To the Priests and Rulers the traitor pretends that he walks in front merely to act as guide. But he has another secret plan which he does not disclose to them. By hastening on in front, he can reach Jesus and the eleven before the Rulers arrive with their armed men. He can thus appear to have no connection with these enemies. "He has been transacting quite another business. It is a mere chance that he arrives when they are coming." He is one of those described by Ecclesiastics, who say: *Who seeth me? Darkness compasseth me about, the walls cover me and no man seeth me.* So long a time he has been with his Master, and yet he knows not that His eye seeth all things, looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts (Ecclesi. xxiii.).

"Most compassionate Lord Jesus, grant that I be not of those who love darkness rather than the light: but glad that Thou hast proved me and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off. And Thou hast foreseen all my ways. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face?" (Psalm cxxxviii.).

#### B. He gave them a sign.

St. Mark writes: *He had given them a sign.*

So that the sign may have been agreed upon some time before, or at the last moment when they are approaching the Garden. In either case, we can see what a cruel advantage a traitor possesses when he ceases to be a pretended friend, and declares himself an enemy. He can make war as no other enemy can. A holy writer on the Passion has said that as when the terrible Judgment is coming, many signs and forewarnings will prepare for it; so too is it in ordinary wars: men are aware that an enemy is coming; but a traitor gives no sign. The storm bursts without any gathering of clouds to caution men. The traitor kisses and stabs in the same moment. *Joab said to Amasa: God save thee, my brother. And he took Amasa by the chin with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not take notice of the sword which Joab had, and he struck him in the side, and shed out his bowels to the ground; and gave him not a second wound, and he died (2 Kings xx.).* As David afterwards said on his death-bed: *He shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war on his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.— Let not his hoary head go down to Hell! in peace (3 Kings ii.).*

"O most merciful Lord Jesus, Who hast called us to be of Thy household—a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people—by Thy bitter Passion save us from the sin of treachery against Thee."

C. *He that betrayed Him—gave them a sign.*

A question occurs: Why was it necessary that Judas should give the sign whereby Jesus is to be recognised? The Priests and Pharisees have often seen Him. But two days ago they held long discussions with Him. What need of a sign?

1. One answer given is that James the brother of John, and cousin of our Lord, bore a strong resemblance to Him, and therefore a mistake is possible.

2. A second answer is drawn from a passage in the works of Origen, where he records that a tradition existed

<sup>1</sup> To Hell—to the grave, to the lower regions.

that Jesus oftentimes changed the appearance of His countenance according to the dispositions of the persons with whom He conversed. This at least is certain, that after His Resurrection His own disciples were sometimes with Him without recognising His features.

3. Then, besides, Judas may have had hopes of securing more money by exaggerating his own importance. He may have urged upon the Priests and Ancients that as Jesus had often before escaped from their hands, and passed away unnoticed, every possible precaution is necessary to secure Him now; and that no one that is not most intimate, can be sure of not being deceived by the changes of His features.

4. Then, moreover, we have to bear in mind that Judas is so much in the possession of Satan, and under his power, that our Lord did not hesitate to say, even at an earlier stage when his wickedness had not reached its present height: *One of you is a devil.* He is following a special inspiration of his master when he resolves upon the plan of delivering over Jesus to death with a kiss.

D. *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He: lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully.*

We have seen in the Gospels, that both before the Pasch, and again during the Supper, *Satan entered into Judas.* With regard to this expression, St. Augustine writes: "Whenever we think or do anything evil, be it little or great, there can be no doubt but that we have the wicked spirit urging us on". But there are degrees in his action against us. Sometimes, as a writer describes him, he is the bird-catcher, arranging the nets, these nets being all those things that gratify the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.* Sometimes he works on the imagination, the fancy, the senses, and even is permitted to take possession of the body. At times, as in the case with Judas, his mastery is so complete, that it resembles the power of Divine grace in great saints. St. Paul, for instance, was so subject to God that he could

say, *Christ liveth in me*. And our Saviour in the Cenacle promised that He and His Father would make their abode in the souls of His disciples. Even so, the Holy Ghost describes the present condition of Judas by saying that *Satan entered into him*. No wonder that we find him acting with malice really diabolic; he is hating infinite goodness and charity and compassion *without cause*. It is even thought by some writers that as Satan entered into the body of the serpent in Eve's garden of Paradise to work the fall of Adam, so now in the garden of the second Eve he enters into the body of Judas and takes possession, in order to bring about the death of the second Adam.

#### STATION IV.

*And when he was come, immediately going up to Him, he saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss? (St. Luke xxii.; St. Matt xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).*

I. In the Revelations of St. Bridget we read that Judas was a man of low stature. From the words of St. Peter in the Upper Chamber: *Being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst*, we gather that he was obese and heavy.

II. It is thought by some Biblical students that he did not approach till after Jesus had spoken to the multitude; but against this opinion there seems to be (1) the word of St. Mark, *When he was come, immediately going up, he saith*; and (2) that wish which he is supposed to have had, to arrive before the multitude in order to appear not to belong to the crowd of enemies; and (3) St. Luke's word that he walked in front of the crowd: *He went before them*.

A. *Immediately going up to Him, he saith, Hail, Rabbi and he kissed Him.*

"*O vos omnes attendite et videte.*" *O all you who go by the way, stop a little while, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow.* Da anantem, St. Augustine writes: "Give me one that loves, and he will understand". No one that has not learned from the Heart of Jesus to love tenderly, can understand the wound inflicted by that treacherous kiss

from His fallen Apostle. He does not complain of Caiphas, or Pilate, or Herod, or the Priests, as feelingly as He grieves over this treason: *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would indeed have borne it. But thou, a man of one mind, My guide and My familiar (Psalm liv.).*

B. Neither do we find anywhere in Holy Writ any such doom pronounced against Annas, or Pilate, or Herod, as the appalling doom that is to be the outcome of this treacherous kiss; a doom, however, that is no wish of the Heart of Jesus, but only a melancholy prophecy of what the traitor has fixed for himself, and what Jesus his Judge will be obliged to ratify—most unwillingly, for not from His Heart shall He afflict or cast off the children of men (Lament. iii.). Of Judas, then, it is written, as we know from St. Peter's word in the Upper Chamber: *Set thou the sinner over him, and may the devil stand at his right hand. When he is judged, may he go out condemned. May there be none to help him, because he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar, and the broken in heart, to put Him to death (Psalm cviii.).*

*He persecuted the broken in heart.* Yes, because, as St. Peter afterwards tells us, Judas was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus. He is guiding and animating all this persecution of the poor man broken in heart. As far as depends on him, by this kiss he puts it into the power of the Priests to work their will against Jesus. In this moment, the first part of our Lord's prophecy at Jericho has its fulfilment. *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests.*

C. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

Being low of stature, he cannot kiss Jesus unless Jesus bows down to accept the kiss, and perchance return it with infinite charity and compassion.

We have a proverbial saying that "extremes meet": here we have diabolic malice and the Divine charity of the Heart of Jesus meeting, and united as if for a kiss of peace. When the Son of God became Man, Heaven and

earth met together and were joined. As the Psalmist says: *Mercy and truth have met each other, truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from Heaven* (Psalm lxxiv.). That was a meeting and a kiss that gave glory to God on high and peace and joy to men; but this sacrilegious kiss, between sin and charity, can it bring joy or triumph to any save to the spirits of darkness, and those who are the children of their father the devil? Yes: peace will come to men, and infinite glory to God from the charity and humility with which Jesus submits to this treacherous kiss.

#### D. *He kissed Him.*

Some holy writers observe that we have no record of any other man being permitted to kiss the face of Jesus. It is, however, of course assumed that the Ever-Blessed Mother kissed her Divine Child. We read, too, that Magdalen was allowed to kiss His feet. Some writers are of opinion that Judas was only doing what all the Apostles did when they returned to His side after an absence; but others, as has been said, think that this sacrilegious kiss was a special invention of Satan and the traitor, in order that a refinement of torment might thus be added to the persecution of the poor man, the broken in heart.

#### E. *He kissed Him.*

*His madness is according to the likeness of a serpent, like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers, nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely* (Psalm lvii.).

He will not hear the voice of the charmers—for more than one have laboured to soften him. Our Blessed Lady, we are told, was specially kind and courteous to him; and doubtless, Simon Peter and John the Beloved, and the rest who loved our Lord, when they heard bitter words from the lips of this miserable man, were inspired by their Master to endeavour to soften his hard heart. These were the charmers whose voice he would not hear. Our Lord Himself, ever a *gracious and merciful God, patient and of*

*much compassion, and easy to forgive evil, is the wizard who charmeth wisely: but all in vain.*

"From the power of the devil, deliver us, Lord Jesus. From anger and hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, Lord Jesus. From the spirit of covetousness, deliver us, Lord Jesus. Blessed Mother of God, by all the anguish which the kiss of Judas brought to thee, save us from being traitors to thy Divine Son."

#### F. *He kissed Him.*

And thus, he has completed his sin. Its beginning was the love of money. In him St. Paul's word is verified to the fullest extent: *The desire of money is the root of all evil*. A writer on the Sacred Passion suggests as an epitaph that might have been written on the unblest grave of the traitor: *They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition* (1 Timothy vi.).

#### G. *He kissed Him.*

And by this act he becomes entitled to thirty pieces of silver. A few days ago he himself valued the splenard of Magdalen at three hundred denarii. He now gives up his apostleship, the bishopric that was to come, his companionship with our Lord and our Lady, and, more than that, he gives up the Body and the life-Blood of Jesus, all for thirty pieces of silver. Some who have contemplated the Sacred Passion carefully, observe that Satan offered our Lord the kingdoms of this world, and all their glory, if He would even once bend His knee and adore him. How comes it, then, they ask, that he procures so small a pay for Judas? For doubtless he could have secured for him a larger offer. The answer given is that Judas is already thoroughly the slave of Satan, and slaves do not need to be allured to do service by large bribes. They are commanded, and they obey; and any small wages are sufficient for them.

#### H. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

To His face he speaks these honeyed words. A few minutes ago, behind His back, when he imagined that Jesus heard not, he said, and said again and again, *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; hold Him fast, and lead Him away carefully.* That word, *Hold Him fast*, will be remembered and not forgotten; chains and cords shall do their work, unmercifully to carry out this injunction of the guide and leader.

Oh, how much torment does Judas add to the persecution of the poor man broken in heart by that cruel order, *Hold Him fast, lead Him away carefully!*

I. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

We must from time to time pause to reflect on ourselves. It will be wise to lay up in our memory the words of Judas in presence of his Master, and his words behind His back: *Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him*—this to His face; *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; lay hold of Him, and lead Him away carefully*—this behind His back.

"With Thee, Lord Jesus, and in Thy presence, I will think over all my years, in the bitterness of my soul, and lament those most miserable moments when before the face of my neighbour I have spoken fair words to him; but behind his back joined with his cruel enemies and been a leader amongst them. What wilt Thou say to me, Lord Jesus, when Thou comest to judge? For what I have done to Thy little ones, I have done to Thee."

J. *Jesus said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

Here again, they who think much on the Sacred Passion observe that we do not find it recorded that Jesus ever addressed any other disciple by the sacred name, "Friend." He did say in the Cenacle to all collectively, *I have called you friends*, but we don't read that He singled out any one, and called him Friend. To Judas alone He says, Friend, and He fully means the word. As far as it rests with Him, Judas was to be His friend, a most intimate friend. But Judas is of a mind widely different. He has counted and calculated, and is ready to give up Jesus entirely and for

ever, and to betray Him to cruel enemies for thirty pieces of silver. *Hold Him fast, and lead Him away carefully.*

"O man! O sinner!" our God says in sorrow, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways* (Isaiah lv.). *For My own sake, I love, and must love, the child I created; yet the child I created has not loved Me. I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me*" (Isaiah i.).

K. *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*

I am the truth, Jesus had said; with Him every word that He utters is truth. If He speaks a kind word, it is spoken with truth and sincerity, and charity ineffable; and therefore when we profess love, it contents Him above measure if our profession is true. If we vow love, a loving obedience or blessed poverty, with desire He desires to find truth and reality in our vow. *An unfaithful and foolish promise*, the Holy Spirit tells us, *displeases Him. It is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised* (Eccles. v.).

The kiss of peace, then, is to Him most sacred, and the kiss of treason anguish beyond measure. He is quite willing and glad to shed His Blood, if we will only give Him true love and friendship. *Give, My son, thy heart to Me* (Prov. xxiii.). In Holy Communion He gives all He has most precious; Himself, His Body, and His Blood; but with yearnings unspeakable He desires that when we approach to receive, we may give Him love for love.

When, therefore, His own disciple betrays with a kiss, and when the Most Holy Sacrament of His Love becomes only a profane mockery, a wound is driven into His Heart more cruel than the nails, or thorns, or the lash inflicted. "If I must be hated, let My overt enemies hate Me, and I can endure it; but let not My own betray Me with a kiss."

L. *He kissed Him.*

And this is the preconcerted signal. Jesus said that

evening in the Supper-Room: *By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another.* In that same hour Judas is giving a very different sign by which men shall know his Master, Jesus of Nazareth. "The Man Whom I shall kiss treacherously is Jesus of Nazareth." That is to say, He is the Christ; He is God. Were He not the *gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil*, man would not be so daring as to kiss Him treacherously. It is on account of "the almighty weakness of His goodness" which so strongly attracts the good, that sinners become so bold. "*Tibi soli peccavi.* I dare not, O my God, treat an earthly king, an earthly master, an earthly friend, or an earthly equal, as I treat Thee."

*M. He kissed Him.*

And this is to be a sure and certain sign. As soon as they see this sign they must lay hands on Him at once and lead Him away carefully. But, all in vain! As in every other instance, the plots and counsels of men against the Lord are all foolish and vain and void. Judas has given the sign, but no one stirs. No one is taught by it. No one sees Jesus, or knows where He is. Their eyes are held. *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.). Judas can will evil, but he has no power to deliver up Jesus. Neither shall any device or contrivance of the Rulers enable them to seize Him.

They shall have the power they wish for, but not through Judas, nor through the Roman cohort; He shall be delivered up solely because He Himself wills it, and when He wills it, and in the way He wills it.

*N. Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

We may stay a little while reflecting on ourselves.

Christians sometimes forget the precept of our Lord, *If thou offer thy gift at the altar and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled with thy brother: and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift* (St. Matt.

v.). They come to the altar to receive His Sacred Body without first being properly reconciled with their offended neighbour. In such a case our Lord may well say: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

Again, before He gave His Sacred Body to His disciples, He said to them, *You are clean.* If then we approach the Holy Table without cleansing our souls well, He will say to us: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* Or if we go to the altar on a certain day, merely because others are going, and because we fear to be notorious, and without discerning the Body of the Lord, *touched with sorrow of Heart* He will say: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

*O. He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

Let us contemplate our Blessed Lady, who is watching and listening, and with all the intensity of her motherly heart pouring forth a prayer that this one treacherous kiss of Judas may to the end of time be repaired by the tender devotion of innumerable souls to the Sacred Face and to the wounds of her Son.

## SCENE II.

"WHOM SEEK YE?"

STATION I.

*Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am He. And Judas also who betrayed Him stood with them. As soon therefore as He had said to them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground* (St. John xviii. 4—6).

To St. John, who wrote much later than the other Evangelists, to supply details omitted by them, we are indebted for this incident, of which they make no mention.

*A. And Judas who betrayed Him stood with them.*

The design ascribed to him, of passing himself off as innocent and taking his place among the other Apostles, is entirely baffled by this word of our Lord: *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?* His treason, he sees,

is found out. It is not safe for him to face the anger of the Eleven: *Wickedness is fearful—a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). Therefore he falls back among his new friends. He has entirely failed in his undertaking to make known Jesus, but he can still perhaps earn his money by zealously urging them to *lead Him cautiously* and take care that He does not escape. The blindness by which the eyes of the multitude are held, so that they do not recognise Jesus, is one wonder more added to those of the Supper-Room, to shake the unhallowed courage of the traitor.

B. *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him.*

Yes, knowing all things, and every thought, every word, every act that shall add to His anguish between this moment and the ninth hour to-morrow; knowing all, and accepting from the hand of the Father every detail of His Sacred Passion, He goes forward—*this Beautiful One, in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength*—the strength of His love, stronger, far stronger than death and than suffering.

St. Jerome and other holy Fathers, as has been said, think that as He walks forward to face the multitude, His beauty and majesty are made more manifest than usual. Let us contemplate Him as He stands alone on the slope, the moonlight and the torches casting their light upon Him, and in full view of all His enemies as they come up from the torrent.

The Psalmist has in our Lord's person described the scene: *Many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant hath besieged Me* (Psalm xxi.).

If Judas has strongly urged a noiseless advance in order to surprise Jesus, the admonition, like all other plans and devices, is vain.

For they come on tumultuously with noise and clamour. As the Psalmist writes, *They have opened their mouths against Me as a lion ravening and roaring*. But now as they draw near, and all suddenly see Him standing beautiful in His robe,

and in the *greatness of His strength* and majesty, every voice is hushed, and there is not an ear in all the multitude that does not hear with astonishment and breathless attention His clear and tranquil voice as He utters the question: *Whom seek ye?* In the front ranks, as we shall see later, stand many of the Chief Priests and Magistrates and Ancients. From them comes the answer: *Jesus of Nazareth*.

C. *Whom seek ye? Jesus of Nazareth.*

Alas! deceptive words! To that question, *Whom seek you?* the very holiest answer: *Jesus of Nazareth*. The Wise Men from the East are seeking Jesus of Nazareth. Disconsolate Magdalen has this very question put to her: *Whom seekest thou?* She too is seeking *Jesus of Nazareth*.

Most lovingly of all the Ever-Blessed Mother with St. Joseph sought Him sorrowing, the same *Jesus of Nazareth*.

*Bene queritur*, a holy writer observes, *et male queritur*. We may adapt St. Thomas' words:

Quærant boni, quærant mali, The good, the bad, both seek, both find,  
Sorte tamen inæquali, But not with outcome of one kind,  
Vitæ vel interitus. In Heaven above, in Hell below

The good find life, the wicked wo.

His faithful servants seek and find Him, and with Him every good.

His wicked foes, too, seek and find, but in Him their ruin.

*This Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many.*

"Merciful Lord Jesus, wearily Thou hast sought for us. Grant us grace to seek for Thee perseveringly, and to find Thee and Thy salvation."

D. *Jesus saith to them, I am He.*

How earnestly would Holy Mary say, if her voice might be heard: "My children, you have found Him. Come, let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us" (Psalm xciv.).

E. *I am He.*

"Non in commotione Dominus"—There is no anger in

His voice. "Even when Thou judgest, O Lord, being *Master of power, Thou judgest with tranquillity*;" and so now being Master of power, He speaks with great tranquillity and with great compassion. *I have pity on the crowd*, He said formerly. Much more pity has He now on the multitude enslaved by their malicious rulers; and in pity and mercy, in order to check them in their course of wickedness, He causes His word to enter, *more piercing than any two-edged sword, and to reach unto the division of the soul and the spirit*; of the joints also and the marrow (Hebrews iv.).

F. *As soon, therefore, as He had said, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground.*

Glad indeed had our Saviour been if when they heard Him say, *I am He*, they had of their own will come forward and fallen on their faces to adore Him.

But now against their will they reel backwards and fall to the ground. Yet not in anger has He spoken. The Psalm tells us that when He wills *He looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble* (Psalm ciii.). With one glance, one wish, He could make the earth open under their feet, or *with one rough word destroy them all* (Wisdom xii.). But His wish is not at all *the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezech. xxxiii.).

As they lie prostrate and fear-stricken, His compassionate Heart speaks to each of them: *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways. And why will you die, O house of Israel?*

G. *Jesus said to them, I am He.*

St. Augustine suggests this thought: If in the day of His weakness the voice of the Lord can *break the cedars*; *yea, break the cedars of Libanus* (Psalm xxviii.), what will be the effect of His words when He shall come in His majesty and give judgment?

*If Thou shalt observe iniquities, Lord Jesus, who shalt stand it?*

Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Juxta est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

Also, what fear and trembling then,  
When Jesus comes to judge all men!

"In that day of judgment deliver us, O Lord."

H. *Jesus said, I am He.*

Many in that crowd had never heard His voice before. His first word to them takes effect: but to us our God has spoken "*multifariam multisque modis*"—*at sundry times and in divers manners—I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me* (Jerem. xxxv.).

I. *Jesus said, I am He.*

And to each of us He will say as soon as we die, *I am He*. It was to Me you gave to eat and drink. *I am He* that was hungry, *I am He* Whom you visited, *I am He* Whom you clothed. And His word will then have an effect more overpowering than in the Garden. Oh, how blessed those faithful servants of Jesus who die saying to Him, *Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy name. The just wait for me until Thou reward me* (Psalm cxli.).

J. *Jesus said, I am He.*

"Come to Me, you who labour; for I am He Who can refresh you. Even if the sinner be dead, let him come to Me, for I am the Resurrection and the Life: I am He Who can call him from death to life." When we rebel against suffering, He says most compassionately, "*I am He* that sent it, will you not drink the chalice with Me, for I am wounded and bruised for Thee?"

K. *I am He.*

At Holy Communion some crave inordinately for sensible consolation, and are downcast because they find it not. If our Lord might be heard, He would remind us that the Blessed Eucharist is a remembrance of His Passion. "I that come to you, *I am He* that suffered Agony in the Garden for you; *I am He* that died on a Cross for you." You are receiving Jesus Crucified. Must you then abound with comfort and consolation?

L. *They went backward and fell to the ground.*

*Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, O Lord. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord* (Ecclus. i.).



Does this miracle awaken salutary terror in the souls of those lying here on the ground?

Does the courage of the Roman soldiers falter? For men can be brave in battle against their fellow-men, and yet wither away for fear when God shows His power. Do they grow more and more displeased with the unholy work for which their rest is broken? That centurion who is to receive so much grace on the morrow, is he prepared for conversion by the holy fear inspired as he lies on the ground? How many are touched by grace we know not. It is evident that very many remain obdurate. Like Pharaoh, the moment the hand of God ceases to strike, they harden their hearts.

## STATION II.

*Again therefore He asked them : Whom seek you ? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered : I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way. That the word might be fulfilled which He said : Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one (vv. 7—9).*

*A. Again He asked, Whom seek you ?*

Are His enemies risen again to their feet when He puts this second question? Or is it perchance the quiet tranquillity with which He speaks that gives back courage to them, and makes them think that the danger is over? It was a saying among the ancients, that nothing dries so quickly as a tear. Fear also passes away quickly when the cause is no longer present. St. James speaks of a man *beholding his own countenance in a glass, and he went away and presently forgot what manner of man he was* (c. i.). Certain it is that impressions are effaced from the mind as quickly as from the sandy shore when the tide comes in. In desolation we forget what we were in consolation. In consolation it is difficult indeed to realise how weak we were in time of temptation. Only those rendered prudent by Divine grace carry out the teaching of Ecclesiasticus :

*Remember poverty in the time of abundance ; and the necessities of poverty in the day of riches* (c. xviii.).

*B. They answered, Jesus of Nazareth.*

"*Attendite.*" If these enemies, despite such a check, persevere in seeking Jesus to their own ruin, should we yield to small difficulties, and turn back, and cease to seek for Him, when with Him we find all else? Have we not His sure promise, *Seek, and you shall find*? But as He has given us great strength of will, He requires that we seek with a strong will and persevering importunity.

*The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.*

*C. I have told you that I am He.*

The first time this word only scared and terrified and bewildered. We may observe how a word from our Lord produces at different times different effects. Now, apparently, they hear it without terror.

In many different ways our Lord is used to speak. To His servants well disposed His words bring peace and courage and love. To them He says : *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction* (Jerem. xxix.). To them His words are : *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name. Thou art Mine* (Isaías xliii.).

"Speak to me, and correct me, Lord Jesus, in mercy (Psalm cxl.), but rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath (Psalm vi.) by being silent to my soul."

*D. If therefore you seek Me, let these go.*

From these words we gather that the preconceived plan between Judas and the Rulers is to seize the Apostles as well as their Divine Master. Remember, our Lord said in the Cenacle, *remember My word that I said to you : If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*. This shall certainly be so to the end of time. True and faithful disciples shall ever share with their Master the enmity of the wicked and of Satan.

Still the hour for this is not yet come. Jesus, according to the plans of the Eternal Father, is to tread the wine-

press alone. *Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow hereafter* (St. John xiii.).

E. This is the third miracle worked by our Lord in the Garden to soften the heart of Judas and His other enemies.

First, Judas gives the sign agreed upon, but in vain. Their eyes are held.

Secondly, He casts them all on the ground.

And now, thirdly, He lays a command on them which takes away from them all power of executing what they have resolved upon, and what they so much desire to do. They are determined to seize the disciples,

But must let them go.

F. This incident we must keep well in mind throughout our contemplation of the Sacred Passion: for it brings home to us this most necessary lesson, that even when the prince of darkness and wicked men seem to have all power, yet God is always the Lord of the storm. What truth do we need more often than this, when the enemies of Christ are persecuting His Bride the Church?

*He said the word, and there arose a storm of wind, and the waves thereof were lifted up, they mount up to the heavens, and they go down to the depths:*

*They were troubled, and reeled like a drunken man: and all their wisdom was swallowed up.*

*And they cried to the Lord in their affliction, and He brought them out of their distresses. And He turned the storm into a breeze; and its waves were still; and they rejoiced because they were still; and He brought them to the haven which they wished for.*

*Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to Him, and His wonderful works to the children of men* (Psalm cvi.).

G. *If therefore you seek Me, let these go.*

The Apostles have a work to do for Him on earth. They are to gather in the harvest in gladness for which He has sown in tears. They are to die with Him later, but not now; for they are to be the seed of His future Church. St. Paul quotes the prophetic words of Isaiah: *Unless the Lord*

*of Sabeoth had left us a seed, we had been made as Sodom, and we had been like to Gomorrah* (Romans ix.).

It was commanded in Deuteronomy: *If thou find as thou walkest by the way a bird's nest in a tree, or on the ground, and the dam sitting upon her young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take her with the young* (Deut. xxii.). They are not to take both the Christ and His Apostles, but must leave a seed.

H. *Thou shalt not take her with the young.*

Words akin to these our Saviour now speaks to the wicked spirits: *Me you may seize; I deliver Myself up to your power. But all My brethren whom you have hitherto enslaved, you shall set free and let go. He shall deliver the poor from the mighty; the needy that had no helper. He shall save the children of the poor, and shall humble the oppressor.*

Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, takes upon Him the iniquities of us all, and goes forth to meet Lucifer, and, by enduring meekly, conquers him: *I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey* (Job xxix.). *He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed* (Isaiah liii.).

“By Thy bitter Passion and Death, Lord Jesus, deliver us from hardness of heart.”

Eia Mater, fons amoris,	Holy Mother, fount of love,
Me sentite vim doloris,	Send me sorrow from above,
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.	Make me mourn and weep with thee.

I. *That the word might be fulfilled which He said: Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

In His parting prayer, after instituting and offering the Holy Sacrifice, He had said: *Those whom Thou gavest Me, have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.* Our Lord may lose His disciples in more ways than one. If they should be slain, He would lose them. If they withdraw from Him and cease to follow Him, without, however, turning against Him, He loses them as chosen disciples. If they fall away by great sin, and pervere in

sin, as Judas has done, and become sons of perdition, then He loses them entirely and for ever.

When we hear the words spoken in the Cenacle : *I have not lost any one but the son of perdition*, we naturally interpret that our Blessed Lord is speaking of losing disciples through their apostasy ; but here St. John tells us that He also intended to express that none of His Apostles would be taken from Him by force.

Some of the holy Fathers, however, think it probable that He foresees that if seized and tortured while their faith is in its present weak state, they would yield to persecution and fall away from Him, and so be lost in the worst sense.

*J. Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

Secure indeed, and most blessed is he *who dwelleth in the aid of the Most High*, and shall abide under the protection of our Lord Jesus. For He is *the strong man armed, who keepeth his court, and those things are in peace which he possesseth* (St. Luke xi.). For never can there come a stronger than He to wrest them from Him.

“Guard us, O Lord, as the apple of Thine eye. Guard us from our own inconstancy, for we are prone to evil.”

*K. Of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

Parents and those in authority may occasion the loss of those under their charge by over severity, or over indulgence ; by want of watchfulness, by not correcting.

Again, we may lose good and true friends, whom God has given to us, by an outburst of temper : *He that upbraideth his friend, breaketh friendship* (Ecclus. xxii.) ; or again, by ingratitude, or by abusing their trust.

If we have lost friends, what have we done to regain them ? *Although thou hast drawn a sword at a friend, despair not, for there may be a returning* (Ecclus. xxii.).

If we have occasioned the loss of any souls committed to us, what have we done to win them back ? It will be

a grievous weight upon our conscience at death if we have lost those whom God gave to us, and done nothing to repair the loss.

## SCENE III.

MALCHUS.

STATION I.

*Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus and held Him. And they that were about Him, seeing what would follow, said to Him : Lord, shall we strike with the sword ? And one of them struck the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear.*

*Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. And Jesus answering said, Suffer ye thus far* (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Luke xxii. ; St. John xviii.).

A. The order of these details seems to be :

1. Some of the servants who are with the Priests and Ancients in front of the soldiers come forward and lay hands on Jesus. It is even probable that some of the Priests themselves rush forward to seize Him.

2. The Apostles, who are close to Him, make resistance and say : *Lord, shall we strike with the sword ?*

3. Without waiting for His answer, Peter draws his sword, and aims a heavy blow at Malchus.

4. Thereupon our Saviour says calmly, but as one having power and authority : *Suffer ye thus far.*

B. *Suffer ye thus far.* Some commentators understand these words as addressed to Peter and the disciples, enjoining abstinence from all violence. But others are of opinion, and this opinion seems more probable, that our Lord is speaking with authority to the Rulers and their servants, and bidding them for the present to unhand Him, as He has not yet given them permission for His capture. He wishes to use His hands in healing Malchus, and He

wishes also, in His infinite compassion, to open the blinded eyes of the multitude, by showing them that they cannot have any power over Him but what He gives them.

1. Some students of the Holy Scriptures raise the question whether St. Peter had a sword. They think it unlikely that he had, and conjecture that he wounded Malchus with one of the large sacrificial knives used in the immolation of the Lamb. But there does not seem to be any good reason why we should not adhere to the more obvious sense of the Gospel narrative. Our Blessed Saviour says, *He that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword.* The disciples take His words literally, and answer, *Lord, behold here are two swords.* And He said to them, *It is enough.* It is not anything surprising, that two swords are found in the house of the owner of the large and well-appointed guest-chamber. Neither is it surprising that St. Peter, who believes that danger is near, and who is resolved to die with his Master, girds himself with one of the swords.

St. John, who is supplying details accurately, writes: *Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it.* St. Matthew's words are equally clear: *One of them, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword.* St. John afterwards tells us that our Lord said to him: *Put up thy sword into the scabbard.*<sup>1</sup>

2. St. John, who wrote long after the others, is the only one who gives the name of St. Peter: the other Evangelists use words such as these: *One of them struck the servant.* When they wrote, Malchus and his friends might possibly have sought to be revenged, had they known who struck the blow. When St. John wrote, St. Peter was out of their reach, and Malchus may have been converted to Christianity.

3. Some of the holy Fathers are of opinion that St. Peter, when he struck the blow, fully intended to kill the servant who dared to lay hands on his Divine Master, and they ask the question whether by this act he incurred the guilt of mortal sin.

St. Augustine thinks that he sinned grievously. St. Chrysostom, St. Leo, Venerable Bede and others think not; as he knew how Phineas had been commended for striking a death-blow. They therefore commend his zeal in striking, and his humility and obedience in putting up his sword.

4. Why did not the soldiers strike down St. Peter with their swords? From the context it seems to be clear that the Priests and Pharisees and their servants were to the front, and the soldiers in the background, to be used when needed. It is quite probable, as has been said, that some of the infuriated Priests were themselves among the first to lay hands on Jesus.

Then why did not the servants use their clubs to avenge

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *μάχαιραν*, however, used here and in the other passages, does not help us much to determine the sense. At different times it seems to have been used for a sacrificial knife, or a dagger, or the short, curved sword.

Malchus? Doubtless they would have done so had not they been overawed by our Saviour's command: "*Smile unto me*"—"Suffer ye thus far, thus far." Speaking calmly, but with authority, He makes them understand that they need not retaliate, that no harm is to come from the blow.

Some interpreters are of opinion that the servants had already bound Him when He said these words: *Suffer ye thus far*, and that His meaning was, "Suffer Malchus to come to Me," or, "Suffer Me to stretch out My hand to him."

According to the interpretation which we are following, our Lord for the moment forbids all violence, and also forbids them to lay hands on Him till He gives permission.

### C. Simon Peter struck the servant of the High Priest.

If St. Peter does sin through over zeal, consider how often, how very often, we sin through want of zeal in God's honour and our neighbour's salvation.

Catholics are sometimes afraid to observe the precept of abstinence lest men should notice them; afraid to approach Holy Communion because others are not going, and they will be considered singular; afraid to check discourses about things of which St. Paul writes: *Let them not be so much as mentioned among you, as becometh saints.* So, too, when an absent man is assailed by a venomous tongue simply because he is absent, and therefore powerless to defend himself, we might often silence the calumniator or detractor by a word or a frown; but we dare not. We fear men more than God; we forget the word that our Blessed Saviour spoke: *Everyone that shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father Who is in Heaven.* But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in Heaven (St. Matt. x.).

Again, what more prolific source of evils in the Church of Christ than a want of zeal in those who hold authority either in domestic life or public life, and suffer abuses to multiply unchecked? The Prophet of the Lord, speaking as if he were an enemy, says: *All ye beasts of the field, come to devour; all ye beasts of the forest. The watchmen are all blind, they are all ignorant; dumb dogs not able to bark; seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams* (Isaiah lvi.).

## STATION II.

*Jesus therefore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard: the chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?* (St. John xviii.).

*All that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Think-est thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that so it must be done?* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. *How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that so it must be done?*

Our Lord is referring to the prophecies concerning Him; such, for instance, as Jeremias (Lament. iv.): *The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins.* (Isaia lili.): *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter; and the prophetic word of Zachary, to which He alluded in the Cenacle: Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered* (c. xiii.).

B. *How shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?*

We must not think that, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, the enemies of Christ are in any way forced or urged or moved from above to do as they did. The Prophets under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit merely wrote down what God's omniscience sees being done by men, long before their life on earth is begun. Our Lord now quotes these prophecies in order to strengthen the weak faith of His disciples, by reminding them that all that is about to happen has been foreknown and permitted.

C. *Put up thy sword.*

He gives St. Peter, His future Vicar, a very careful instruction to guide him and many others in time to come; and while He speaks, the Priests and Ancients, though full of a mad desire to seize Him, yet, on account of His command, stand powerless, and offer no interruption. He teaches St. Peter and all of us that *He is offered because He*

*willed it. By Thy ordinance, O Lord, the day goeth on, for all things serve Thee* (Psalm cxviii.). And according to Thy ordinance and Thy good pleasure every incident of this holy night is regulated. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, for you are better than many sparrows.* The Holy Church, His Bride, shall have a better protection than the sword can give. *I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen* (Osee i.).

D. *Put up thy sword.*

*For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and live.* While St. Peter is carried away by his impetuous zeal, our Blessed Saviour is saying to the hearts of His enemies: *My people, what have I done to thee? Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee* (Isaia xlix.).

E. *Put up thy sword. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*

"Attendite." Let us learn from the Blessed Mother of God to lay up this word in our hearts, that it may be a holy waking thought for every morning of our lives. How sacred each day will become if as we wake we can say from our heart: *The chalice which our Father in Heaven has mingled for me to-day, and given to me, shall I not drink it?* And what thought can arm us against the terrors of death so well as this: It is the chalice which my Father has mingled for me?

F. *The chalice which My Father hath given Me.*

But some one might answer: I can accept what God sends; but I cannot submit to the injustice of men.

Contemplate then our Lord: and mark what men are doing to Him; yet He calls it all *the chalice which My Father hath given Me.*

For His Passion, as has been already said, was planned by the wicked spirits in Hell; and afterwards, their plan was, under their inspiration, adopted by the princes of the people in Jerusalem. But all these plans are, to use our human language, revised with infinite care by the Providence of God, which watches every hair of our heads. Devils and men are allowed to execute just so much of their designs as fits in with the loving, merciful decrees of our Father in Heaven. Satan and his dupes on earth would like to seize the Apostles, and riddle them, and sift them, and *examine them by outrages and tortures* (Wisdom ii.); but they cannot have their will; they must *let them go*. Later, they will want to break the bones of the Lamb of God, but this *desire of the sinners shall perish. You shall not break a bone of Him.*

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us *now* and at the *hour of our death*: that *now* we may carefully lay up in our hearts this word: *The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?* and that when the bitterness of death is come, we may find strength and nourishment and life for our poor souls in this word that *proceedeth from the mouth of thy Son, our God.*"

God gave life; God takes it away; and He knows how to mingle sweetness with the bitterness of the chalice. *Blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job i.).

*G. Put up thy sword. For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

Out of love for our self-preservation then, if not for any higher motive, we must abstain from anger and violence and revenge. If we strike with the sword, the sword will strike us. If we curse another, a curse will come upon us. *For with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* Far more wise are they who follow faithfully our Lord's teaching. *Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.).

On such men nothing but blessings, the very choicest blessings, come down from Heaven.

*H. Thinkst thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?*

"*Attendite.*" Let us for a little while contemplate the docility and singular obedience of the holy angels, who stand with the *high praises of God in their mouth and two-edged swords in their hands* (Psalm cxlix.). Their most humble reverence for their King, their fidelity, their gratitude, their burning love, are beyond our thoughts. Nothing but *high praises* of their Lord are in their hearts; and one of them could, if God so willed, sweep away all the armies of Rome, as easily as the host of Sennacherib; but their one desire is that the will of their God be done on earth and in Heaven. They look on, therefore, in humble meekness, while a few foolish and senseless men heap outrages and torture on their beloved Lord. They are the same blessed spirits whom St. John in after-days saw *fall down on their faces and adore God, saying, Amen. Benediction and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honour and power and strength to our God, for ever and ever, Amen.* They are of the same mind now. But they endure all in most obedient inactivity; each of them saying with their King: *O holy God, not as I will, but as Thou.* And as they contemplate with reverential love the beauty of our Saviour's charity, they can only repeat the word: *Who is like our God?*

*I. More than twelve legions of angels.*

And we must not forget how in our days also these blessed spirits look on full of a holy envy at us who have in this world the monopoly, the sole right, of doing God's work for Him here. Gladly indeed would they, if they might, nurse the sick for Jesus Christ, and teach His little ones; but *God hath given this earth to men*, that they may earn an abundant outpouring of His love throughout eternity, by being good to Him in the person of His little ones during their short day of privilege here.

*J. More than twelve legions of angels.*

How safely may we, when in trouble, commit our cause to our God. For which of the two is better, to trust with Simon Peter to our poor sword, or to God's twelve legions of angels? And then, again, what are all the blessed angels, when compared to the infinite power and greatness of Him Who stands here in presence of these misguided men? If with the breath of His mouth He can lay them in the dust, does He need help from the host of Heaven?

*For great power always belonged to Thee alone, and who shall resist the strength of Thy arm? For the whole world, of angels and men, before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth (Wisdom xi.).*

## STATION III.

*And when He had touched his ear, He healed him*  
(St. Luke xxii. 51).

*A. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.* "This is what our Saviour taught; and what He teaches He always does. Malchus had been foremost to lay hands on Him, and, to please his miserable masters, was ready for every kind of outrage. Jesus has no outrages for him, nor *one rough word*."

We see Malchus sometimes painted as lying on the ground, felled by the heavy blow struck by St. Peter. If so, he is doubtless full of terror that each moment may bring a second and a fatal blow. But his cries and his moaning from the pain of his wound, attract no pity from his fellows. His one friend is Christ Jesus, Whom he was eager to drag to death.

"O Jesus, meek of Heart, give us grace to be meek and charitable with Thee."

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour stooping down to Malchus; calling him by his name, speaking kind words to win his misguided heart.

Oh, let us look and do according to the pattern. *Love*

*your enemies, do good to them who hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you.*

*B. He healed him.*

Here is another great grace offered to Judas and to the poor sinners present; another great miracle added to those already worked, to bring light to their minds and to soften their hearts. Let us reflect on our own case. We say daily to our God: "Thou watchest over me with incomparable love, every moment bestowing favours and preserving me from evil". Therefore does Holy Church continually inculcate that "ever, where and at all times" we ought to be giving thanks. Yet how often, oh, far too often, we remain unmoved, as these unhappy men do, by the mercy and charity of our God!

C. It would be a great consolation if we knew that Malchus, when the sacred hand touched his wound and restored his ear to its place, was at the same time touched in his heart by grace, as the leper and the blind were when Jesus healed them. On this point we have no certain information. Some writers represent him as remaining hardened and taking active part in the outrages heaped on our Saviour; others assume that grace healed his soul when the hand of our Lord healed his wounded head.

"O merciful Jesus, fulfil Thy promise in our regard: *I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh*" (Ezech. xi.).

*D. When He had touched his ear.*

Observe how completely our Lord seems to human eyes to be at the mercy of His enemies when He is stooping down in the midst of them to heal Malchus, but no one can lay hands on Him, or strike, because He has not yet given the permission. He is quite safe, for *Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.).

## STATION IV.

*And Jesus said to the Chief Priests and Magistrates of the Temple, and the Ancients that were come unto Him: Are you come out as it were against a thief with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the Temple you did not stretch forth your hands against Me (vv. 52, 53).*

*A. Are you come out as it were against a thief?*

We must contemplate the calm tranquillity of our Lord in the midst of these furious enemies. They are on fire with impatience to seize Him, and He is more desirous than they are that all may be done quickly. But He will leave nothing untried that may induce them not to harden their hearts; and they are compelled to listen to His expostulations. They cannot touch Him, or arrest His speech.

*B. Jesus said to the Chief Priests and Magistrates of the Temple, and the Ancients that were come unto Him.*

From these words, then, we know that many of the leading men are there to take part in His arrest. They do not leave this work to underlings. They have had a busy day, and yet they grudge not the hours of their rest. *We have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways.*

“Ever-Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may have grace to learn from the enemies of thy Son and the children of this world to work for Him with some share of the energy which they put forth against Him.”

*C. When I was daily with you in the Temple.*

*I sat daily with you in the Temple, St. Matthew writes.* Never does our Blessed Saviour cease during His Passion to reason with these men who are duped by the father of lies. He is now trying to induce them to reflect, and to ask themselves how it is that though they were in the past so enraged against Him, yet they never were able to seize Him when He sat with them daily in the Temple teaching the people. *With desolation is all the land made*

*desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.* He is striving to get them to consider in their hearts how utterly unprotected, to all appearance, He was in those days, and how completely at their mercy; and to ask themselves what it was that then held them back from satisfying their vengeance. What but His holy will? His hour was not then come.

*D. While we contemplate, we must store up in our minds and hearts all the different words and works by which our Lord here in the Garden labours to move the free-will of the sinner, that he may be converted and live. What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done (Eccles i.). He is now the same Jesus as then; and says now, to the poor sinner deceived by Satan, as earnestly as then: Why will you die?*

*He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance (2 St. Peter iii.).*

*E. When I was daily with you in the Temple.*

If sin were not poisoning the minds and hardening the hearts of these miserable men, our Saviour's word would bring home to them how blameless and inoffensive His life has been; how He has spent His days in teaching the people and healing all manner of diseases, and how *He did all things well* (St. Mark vii.). But now these things are hidden from thy eyes (St. Luke xix.). *They understood not concerning the loaves, for their heart was blinded* (St. Mark vi.).

“O Lord Jesus, by Thy bitter Passion, have mercy on us. Chastise us not in Thy wrath. Do not say to Thy Angel of Justice: *Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes*” (Isaias vi.).

*F. Are you come out as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs?*

*Thou, O Lord, shall laugh at them* (Psalm lviii.). “When you were just now lying on the ground, what did swords and clubs avail you?”



"When I was daily with you, was I a thief and a robber? or if I was then evil, had you in those days no swords and clubs to use against Me?" He is labouring to induce them to *consider in their hearts*, that they may be converted and live. And greatly is the Heart of our Lord now consoled, when we *consider in our hearts* and meditate on Gospel truths, and remember the Sacred Passion, and contemplate all the scenes of His sorrow.

G. *But that the Scriptures may be fulfilled* (St. Mark xiv.). Ever mindful of those around Him, our Lord again recalls to His disciples and the Priests and the Ancients that all that is going on has been foreknown and foretold. This is one more effort to rescue His enemies from the power of Satan, and to lessen the effect of temptation on the souls of His disciples.

#### STATION V.

*But this is your hour, and the power of darkness* (v. 53).

##### A. *This is your hour.*

Now at length, *touched with sorrow of Heart inwardly*, after having *shown many good works* to His people, after multiplying signs and wonders, after reproving, entreating, and rebuking *in season and out of season, in all patience*, He at last says to the determined sinner: "Be it done to thee according to thy will". *This is your hour.*

With grief of heart the good father at last yields to the foolish and perverse and ungrateful and unfilial wish of his prodigal son, and gives him *the portion that falleth to him*.

Man does indeed *an evil and a bitter thing*, when at last by a terrible perseverance he constrains his Creator to abandon him. *My people heard not My voice, and Israel hearkened not to Me. So I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall walk in their own inventions* (Psalms lxxx.). Thrice blessed those two disciples, who, on the contrary, constrained their Lord to stay with them.

When at length, after resisting our madness with infinite mercy, our most compassionate Father ceases to speak, and

lets us go according to the desires of our hearts, it is *a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds* (Sophonias i.).

And yet it is actually in this terrible time that men say: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). Oh, how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin and to prosper!

Why then, holy Job asks, *why then are the wicked advanced and strengthened with riches? Their cattle have conceived and failed not; their cows have calved and is not deprived of her fruit. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth. His answer to this question is short, but terrible beyond all thought. In a moment they go down to Hell* (Job xxi.).

*The Most High*, the Holy Ghost tells us, *is a patient rewarder*. He has the long eternity before Him, and He need not be in a hurry to reward us here. Still less need He be quick to chastise the poor sinner here. *Thou judgest with tranquillity, O God*. For there is no cause for haste. Eternity, never-ending eternity, is long enough to reward Thy faithful servants and, alas! long enough to chastise the impenitent.

B. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

We must notice how *self* and *darkness* go together. When man seems to be reigning and ruling, in reality the prince of darkness is reigning and ruling. Man can never be lord and master. He is created to serve. If he will not serve God, he must of necessity be the slave of Lucifer. Just as every Church that will not obey Christ's Vicar, necessarily becomes the slave of the tyrannical State, so it is with each man's soul; we never can have independence. Either we willingly submit to our God, or we become the most wretched slaves of the prince of darkness.

C. *This is your hour.*

"Oh, say this word, Lord Jesus, in a merciful sense to

us. Remind us that it is still our time of privilege in this world, in which, by serving Thy little ones, we can serve Thee, and every hour win more and more of Thy everlasting gratitude and love."

D. *And the power of darkness.*

Jesus is the light of the world. Sin brings darkness. Our Lord was weeping near this spot a few days ago, and saying to Jerusalem: *If thou hadst known the things that are for thy peace. But now they are hidden from thy eyes.* Culpable blindness is, in this world, one of the worst chastisements of sin. When the eyes of the body are blind, men long for their cure. When the soul is blind, men have no desire for a cure. They have no sense of their misery. *Thou sayest, I am rich and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and blind and naked. I counsel thee, anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see* (Apoc. iii.).

E. *It is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

By this word, our Blessed Saviour at length gives final permission to men, and to the wicked spirits, to do their will, so far as their will fits in with the designs of His Eternal Father. *They will do out of malice*, what the Eternal Father *out of infinite charity and mercy* permits to be done.

From this moment to the hour of the evening sacrifice to-morrow, when all shall be consummated, men have permission to afflict His Sacred Body; and the spirits of darkness have permission to afflict His Most Holy Soul.

He has said, and it shall be done. Therefore has He given a charge to His holy angels, only so far to restrain the action of men and the princes of darkness, that they shall not impede the designs of His Eternal Father.

F. Before He speaks this word, *It is your hour*, He has carried out in practice His own teaching. For He is the wise King about to go to make war against another king, who first sits down to think whether He is able to meet him, who with twenty thousand cometh against Him.

Most prudently has He calculated. In the Garden,

He gave leave to all the human passions of fear and sadness and weariness to help the adversary by setting every obstacle before Him. He has well counted the cost, and now, *knowing all things that (shall) come upon Him*—every hair of His Head that shall be plucked out; every part of His Body that shall be bruised; every outrage that shall afflict His Heart—He says to the Eternal Father: *My heart is ready: and to men with all meekness and charity: This is your hour.*

G. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

More than once Jesus had spoken of this coming hour. *I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work* (St. John ix.).

*If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not. But if he walk in the night he stumbleth* (St. John xi.).

*Thou hast appointed darkness*, Lord Jesus; and it is night. In it shall the beasts of the woods go abroad, the young lions roaring after their prey (Psalm ciii.). Men, no longer human, men made like to senseless beasts, are around Him; they have looked and stared upon Me (Psalm xxi.).

#### SCENE IV.

##### THE SEIZURE.

##### STATION I.

*Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled* (St. Matt. xxvi. 56).

A. All understood, both His disciples and His enemies, that our Lord's last word, *This is your hour*, is a permission to men to execute their wicked wish, as if He had said: *Be it done according to your will.* By this word He accepts all those details which He specified a week ago, near Jericho. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and (1) the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) and they shall condemn Him to death; and (3) Shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; (4) to be mocked, (5) and scourged, (6) and crucified (St. Matt. xx.).

B. The Apostles are taken unprepared. They enter into the temptation, and scandal begins. They have been forewarned more than once; but they have not *considered in their heart* the warning words of the Lord their Master. They have not watched and prayed that they may not enter into temptation. Simon Peter had never realised, never believed, that anything like this could come to his revered Master.

*Fear is nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought.* We may say the same of some other temptations. Unless men say most heartily and most earnestly, O God, *lead us not into temptation*, when they come into presence of temptation they imagine themselves to be spell-bound; they seem unable to help themselves with reasoning. Drunkards believe themselves to be very firmly resolved until temptation is present. Then they become all at once utterly reckless. Hence the reason why our spiritual guides insist on the absolute necessity of flying from certain temptations. They know well that in these cases: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Ecclesi. iii.).

C. *Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled.*

Had the Apostles listened more to our Lord's warning that *the flesh is weak*, and prayed very earnestly, what would have been the result? Clearly it is our Lord's will that they be set free. But this He would have managed for them without their having afterwards the life-long sorrow that they had wounded His Heart by leaving Him and fleeing away.

Yet, the boundless charity of the Heart of Jesus turns even their infirmity unto good. He uses the sins and weaknesses of men as the manure which is to help the fig-tree to bear better fruit. *O felix culpa!* the blessed angels will say in after-years, as they contemplate the contrition of Peter and the rest.

D. *The disciples fled.*

Still we may in contemplation dwell on the extreme pain which Jesus feels when His Apostles leave Him and flee

away. For we must bear in mind what has been already said, that as when eyesight is very perfect it can perceive objects much more clearly than weak eyes can, so the perfect Heart of our Saviour is sensitive in a far higher degree than all other human hearts. Kindness and unkindness affect Him as they affect no other. Loving as He does, He desires with infinite desire a return of true and tender love. And therefore it is quite possible that the desertion of His Apostles is a more painful wound than any inflicted on Him by the armed multitude. It was He who said that word: *The enemies of a man are they of his household.* They can inflict the severest wounds.

E. *The disciples leaving Him, fled.*

Stay a little while longer, and dwell on the loneliness of our Lord. We can gather from the Psalms how much His most affectionate Heart felt the desire to be consoled by sympathy from His own. *I looked on the right hand and beheld, and there was no one that would know Me. There is no one that hath regard to My Soul* (Psalm cxli.). *I am become as a man without help. Thou hast put away My acquaintance far from Me. They have set Me an abomination to themselves* (Psalm lxxxvii.). *And they that were near Me stood afar off* (Psalm xxxvii.).

We may go in spirit to console our Lord in those sanctuaries where He lives in His tabernacle solitary and neglected.

F. Many poor sufferers complain that they are left in loneliness. Our Blessed Lord takes good care to share this kind of sorrow with men, as well as every other. How ready His Heart is to welcome the lonely if they will only come to Him. *Come to Me, I will refresh you.* In the Cenacle He said: *You shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone. And yet, I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.* How truly also can every sufferer now say: *I am not alone; for Jesus is with me. I am with Him in tribulation.*

G. *I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.* We may add as a comfort to our Blessed Lord: Thou art not alone,

Lord Jesus, for Thy ever Blessed Mother is also with Thee. The Lord is with thee, Mary; and thou art with thy Lord in His loneliness.

#### STATION II.

*Then the band (Cohort) and the Tribune, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him (St. John xviii. 12).*

##### A. *The Cohort and the Tribune.*

The other Evangelists are more brief: *They holding Jesus led Him to Caiphas. Apprehending Him they led Him.* St. John, writing later, adds details by which we see that the soldiers, under the orders of their commanding officer, have joined the servants, and take part in the arrest of Jesus. We have seen that the Priests and Ancients and their servants have hitherto been in front. The soldiers are in reserve ready to quell any resistance, or any rising of the people. Now when it is clear that there is to be no resistance, why are the soldiers brought into action? A very probable answer is found in the text already cited: *Wickedness is fearful; a troubled conscience always fore-casteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.).

The Priests and Ancients have been burning with a feverish impatience to lay hands on Jesus, but He has been talking to them with a leisurely calmness and tranquillity, and all the while they have felt their utter powerlessness against Him; they see that He is too strong for them. In that they are right. They must then have help from the well-trained Roman troops. Here they are wrong. The Roman troops are as helpless as themselves till Jesus says the word: *It is your hour.* When once He has spoken the word, "Let it be done according to your wicked will," the most feeble and decrepit of the Ancients is equal to the task of holding Him and leading Him.

##### *The band (Cohort) and the Tribune.*

These are names used in the Roman armies,<sup>1</sup> and therefore <sup>1</sup>St. Mark xv. 16. They called together for the crowning of thorns the whole Cohort. These are Pilate's Roman guard.

some commentators take for granted that the Jewish Rulers in their excessive and feverish eagerness had thought it necessary to secure the help of the Roman guard. Others, however, and among them one of the latest writers on the Sacred Passion, bring reasons to prove that the Romans took no part in this midnight arrest; and that the only soldiers present were the Temple guard under their officers or magistrates. They quote an example from the Book of the Maccabees in which the word Cohort is applied to the troops of Judas Maccabeus; and from St. Luke's narrative (xxii. 52), it is clear that the *magistrates of the Temple* were present. The Greek text calls them *στυγματοφύλακες*, a word which shows that they were military officers who commanded the Temple guard, a body of police which the Romans still permitted the Jewish Rulers to maintain.

On the other hand, in favour of the opinion which we are following that the troops present were the Roman guard, it may be said (1) that we do not anywhere find the magistrates of the Temple called Tribunes (*ῥατάρχαι*). (2) If we read attentively the Latin and the Greek text of St. John xviii. 3, it seems clear that Judas received from the Chief Priests a body of servants, but not from them the soldiers. A literal translation of the Greek and Latin text would be: *Having received the Cohort* (according to one Greek text, *the whole Cohort*), *and from the Chief Priests servants, etc.* (3) From Ludolf the Carthusian's book on the Passion, we might be inclined to think that he had a copy of the New Testament more explicit in this passage than our own Vulgate, for he quotes the words in this way: *With the Cohort received from the Governor.*

##### B. *Then the Cohort and the Tribune, and the servants of the High Priest took Jesus, and bound Him.*

St. Ignatius directs us (1) to look at the persons; or (2) to listen to their words; or (3) to attend to their actions; (4) sometimes, to note how much and in how many ways our Lord is suffering; (5) sometimes, how entirely voluntary His suffering is; how easily He can deliver Himself but will not; (6) and sometimes to dwell on the thought that He is suffering all this for me.

Afterwards, whichever of these six points we may make use of, we are to reflect on ourselves and try to gain some practical fruit.

As soon, then, as Jesus speaks the word: *This is your hour*, (1) His Apostles yield to fear and flee away. The prophecy is fulfilled: *Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered* (Zach. xiii.). (2) His enemies understand that they can now lay hands on Him.

If we try to listen with our ears, we hear no word from

our Lord. For the present He has ceased to speak. The Prophet foretold this to us. He is made prisoner because *He willed it, and He opened not His mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and He shall not open His mouth* (Isaiah liii.). More than once we have considered that inspired word: *Thou, being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favour disposest of us; for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.). With His enemies the case is quite the opposite. They feel no security in their power; and therefore there is no tranquillity, all is hurry and tumult. *The mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against Me. They have spoken against Me with deceitful tongues; and they have compassed Me about with words of hatred* (Psalm cviii.).

C. *They have encompassed Me about with words of hatred.* From the Priests and Scribes, and Pharisees above all, there is an uncontrolled outburst of words of hatred. To realise its character, we must call to mind the inspired word: *By the enmity of the devil death came into the world, AND THEY FOLLOW HIM THAT ARE OF HIS SIDE.* Death in all its terrible forms, murders, assassinations, wholesale slaughter in battle, and executions on the scaffold: all these and much more are the outcome of diabolic envy; the envy which the fallen angels bear to man, God's image, created to fill the place left vacant by their sin. But this envy of the devils against the first Adam and the first Eve is feeble child's play compared with the rage and malice that has kept *Hell below in an uproar* (Isaiah xiv.) since Lucifer first set his evil eye on God made Man, and on the woman who is the Mother of God.

This being so, these most unhappy Priests and Scribes, as, beyond all others they are Satan's dupes and his creatures, his children, his ministers, his apostles, and entirely of his side, so do they follow him and are full of his spirit. *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do* (St. John viii.). Envy we may

emphatically call the diabolic passion; and in them the spirits of darkness are inflaming this diabolic passion to its very utmost height.

Add to this, that *revenge* is now working alongside with envy in their breasts. For it is only the third day since Jesus publicly, before the people, in the Temple area, uttered so solemnly, so forcibly, so repeatedly, and with such overwhelming authority, wo upon wo against them: *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*

Now their turn is come: "Wo to you, Jesus of Nazareth!" they are shrieking. "Wo to you, seducer, blasphemer, son of Beelzebub! Now shall we know who is the hypocrite, and the whited sepulchre, fair to the eye, and full of filth within!"

"From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, O loving Heart of Jesus, deliver us."

D. Then again, *the mouth of the wicked is opened against Me*, because there is a wild shout of triumph. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, King *Herod was troubled*; and, it is written, *all Jerusalem with him. Why all Jerusalem?* Because men who will not serve their Creator, are ever most eager to become the grovelling slaves of a fellow-man, and of Lucifer. So is it now. These Rulers of the people are, as we have seen, slaves of Lucifer; and they in turn have their slaves, their servants who are bound to earn their poor wages by exulting when their masters exult. Now, therefore, these miserable servants are crowding round; bringing up the torches to cast a bright light on the Prisoner; and, as if they had won a glorious battle, and come upon a rich spoil, they are uproariously passing from mouth to mouth the cry: "They have found Him! They have seized Him! The false Prophet is captured." *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with their lips, and wagged their heads* (Psalm xxi.). Poor wretched dupes of Satan! Children of God changed into slaves of Lucifer, and of Lucifer's slaves!

How well would it fare with them if they would change their allegiance and become servants of Jesus of Nazareth.

"From the snares of the devil deliver us, Lord Jesus; and give us grace to give good heed to Thy holy Word. *How can you believe who receive glory one from another; and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek*" (St. John v.).

E. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And now, besides listening with our ears, we must watch with our eyes. For though these Priests and Pharisees, when there is question of God's service, say and do not; yet now, when yielding their service to their father, the devil, they both say and do; and their cruel deeds go beyond their words of hatred.

*Do it quickly; lead Him carefully,* is the cry. And these slavish servants abound in zeal, and multiply cords and ropes, and chains and fetters. But the Roman soldiers scorn these Jews and their handiwork; and thrust them aside to employ their own more trained and skilful appliances that shall render escape impossible.

F. *They bound Him.*

"Attendie." By the aid of the bright moonlight and the flaming torches, contemplate for a little while, before the tumultuous march begins, our Saviour's probable condition as far as we can gather it from those who have diligently collected details from ancient writers and from the revelations left on record by holy persons. An iron collar with two strong chains attached to it is made fast round His neck. His arms are tightly pinioned behind His back; and His wrists bound together by cords so tightly knotted that His Sacred Blood is flowing from the wounds they cause. His legs, too, are fastened together with shackles intended to render all movement painful and escape impossible. Round His Body, again, ropes are drawn so straitly that His breathing is much impeded. *Wickedness*, we have seen, *is fearful*; and fear is cruel. The terror lest Jesus once again escape is so great that

cords and ropes and chains and fetters are all applied with most useless and superfluous cruelty.

Then, moreover, as His injunction to His own disciples in the past was: *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes*, we may doubtless take for granted that He practises tonight what He taught, and comes barefoot to begin His last journey. In the Cenacle all wore sandals, to remind them that they are God's people, free from bondage. But now Jesus is not a free Man. He is become a bondsman, the *useless*, the *stubborn* slave that *will not be corrected* by words (Prov. xxix.); the *outcast of the people* (Psalm xxi.).

G. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

"Attendie." Let us try, as St. Ignatius advises us, to measure, as best we can, how much our Lord is suffering. The second stage of His Sacred Passion is begun. During the night-watch just ended, unseen spirits were afflicting His Soul. Now men, under the guidance of these same spirits, are continuing their work. The knotted cords are eating into His sacred flesh; the ropes are galling His swollen limbs. With labour He is drawing His breath. The heavy boots of the soldiers are crushing His bare feet. But this is only a part. For they are *doing* as well as *saying*. Those who study diligently all that has been written on the Passion remind us that we are not to think when we read of blows and buffets and outrages, that what is written once, only happened once. From the revelations vouchsafed to our Lord's devout servants, it is clear that it was not only on the *Via Dolorosa* that our Lord fell to the ground, and not alone in the servants' hall was He bruised and spit upon. We may be quite sure that the clubs and staves and iron gauntlets, and the ropes which are in the Garden in such plenty, are used incessantly to multiply heavy blows and bruises, for *by His bruises we are healed*.

To some holy souls it has been revealed how many times our Saviour fell to the ground during His Sacred Passion, either from heavy blows, or through stumbling.

What wonder if they whom He cast a short while ago on the ground, now take their revenge and fell Him with heavy blows to the earth?

We read, too, that the Priests were the first to spit on His sacred face. This form of insult we may be sure is not forgotten in the Garden.

*Yæ vittis* : wo to the conquered! wo to the fallen! was in those days an approved maxim. But never till now has there been a fallen man, a conquered man, so given up to outrage and ignominy and cruelty as Jesus of Nazareth is, Who yet is neither fallen nor conquered. For by His meekness He shall conquer.

*H. The Cohort and the Tribune and the servants took Jesus and bound Him.*

He is bound, but not conquered; He is conquering, and shall possess the land.

Many are the blows that fall upon Him. Very many the words of hatred poured out against Him. Yet, His Heart does not say that there is one too many. "Yet, more, O Lord, yet more!" was the response of St. Francis Xavier when our Lord showed him what he was to endure. With desire infinitely more intense the Heart of Jesus is crying out: "Yet more, My Father, yet more!" And oh, *do it quickly, do it quickly*, is His humble prayer to men: for *how am I straitened till it be accomplished?* As we have seen, He had no mind at all to redeem the world, as He might do, through the infinite value of one precious tear dropping from the eye of the Son of God made Man. As He is betraying Himself and all His Divine rights in order to be able to suffer, so, too, He is robbing His sufferings of their right to have an infinite value, and has resolved, as if their worth were only measurable, that there shall be a proportion both in quantity and variety between His sufferings and the multiplied sins of men.

*I. They bound Him.*

As we contemplate Him bound and chained, let us remind ourselves once again that He is the Mediator, the

go-between. He has to reconcile God with man, and man with God. One part of His work is easy, that is, to move the Eternal Father to forgive man. For, the instant the Father looks on the face of His Christ, out of the infinite reverence due to God made Man, and to Man Who is God, His Father is perfectly appeased, and angry no more with the fallen race.

But now Christ Jesus the Mediator must turn to men and incline their hearts to turn back to their Father Who is in Heaven. Here begins His labour beyond measure. Now must He exert His infinite Wisdom and His inventive Charity, that into the Watches of the Passion, by night and by day, there may be crowded sorrow so multiplied, so varied, so heart-rending, that one or other of the many scenes shall have power to draw every kind of sinner back to his God.

This night and the coming morning are most carefully planned so that the proud man shall witness doings and sufferings that shall wean him from all love of pride.

The sensual sinner, too, must be so scared and terrified by what he sees that he shall renounce the lust of the flesh.

The lover of rule shall find himself in presence of spectacles that shall render the pride of life odious to him, and poverty most dear.

The hopeless sinner shall see sights and hear words that shall bring back the life of hope, and the warmth of love to his frozen heart.

All poor sinners, moreover, shall with their eyes and ears take in the great truth, that they must strike their breasts and do penance.

This is the cause why men and the powers of darkness are permitted to have their hour. Our Saviour Jesus wishes to present Himself to us as the Man of Sorrows in so many shapes of woe and suffering, that no heart shall be able to harden itself against the melting influence of His charity. *There is no one that can hide himself from His heat* (Psalm xviii.).

It is not therefore the anger of God that requires all the blood, all the wounds, all the sorrows of the Sacred Passion. It is the charity of God that multiplies shapes and forms of sorrow in order that one or the other of them may succeed in moving men to understand how evil and how bitter a thing it was when they abandoned the infinite Goodness of their God, and went over as traitors to Lucifer.

J. *The Cohort, the Tribune, and the servants of the Jesus look Jesus.*

These men we see with our eyes. But we must pass beyond what the eye can see or the ear hear. First, then, with the eye and ear of our faith we must see and hear *the spirits of wickedness* who are working against Jesus, far more busily than men are.

Then, secondly, we must penetrate into the mind and Heart of our adorable Saviour Himself, and contemplate how with an energy and activity beyond that of His restless enemies, He is praying and desiring with desires insatiable, that wounds and sorrows be multiplied in His Soul, and on His Body, till every sin that man has committed, or shall commit, is not only cancelled and outweighed and blotted out, but quite forgotten in the beauty and glory of the graces and virtues that abound in the redeemed soul which sin once disfigured; and till, moreover, for every want and weakness and disease of man's soul medicinal grace is provided in profusion; in fact, till redemption is truly and really abundant, passing far beyond a mere reparation of the ruin caused by the Fall. For *not as the offence, so also the gift. For much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one Man Jesus Christ, hath abounded* (Romans v.).

Then lastly we must raise our contemplation to the Eternal Father, Who, yielding to the desires of His Divine Son, mingles the bitter chalice for Him, and lays upon Him the iniquities of us all.

K. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And most humbly and lovingly He calls to us, *O all you who pass by, stay a little while and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow!* But still, forget not, that if My wounds and bruises are many, yet there is not one too many, nor yet enough to satisfy the desire and prayer of My Heart!

*Not too many* to make men see what Lucifer is, and what manner of master he will be to them if they choose to spend their eternity in his prison-house.

*Not too many* to prove to incredulous and despairing men that I love them, and *for My own sake* will forgive their sins.

*Not too many* to wean fallen men and blinded men from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.

*Not too many* to move the forgiven sinner still to be a mourner and a penitent for his forgiven sins.

*Not too many* to enkindle in the heart of My servants the fire that is in My own Heart, and which I came to cast upon the earth.

L. *The Cohort and the Tribune and the servants bound Him.*

"This time," they are crying round Him, "this time He shall not escape." And their boast seems to be a truth. This at least is quite true, that this time *He will not escape*. But, that *He shall not escape*, that these knotted cords and ropes shall render escape impossible, this is as far from truth as light from darkness. If in His secret soul He whispered the slightest wish, *Let us break their bonds asunder* (Psalm ii.), the chains and ropes would become like Samson's bonds, *threads of web*. But never will He by word or wish break these bonds. "For purposely and from choice, *I am become as a Man without help* (Psalm lxxxvii.). In days past when they cast hands on Me, I passed through the midst of them. For then My hour was not come." Now His hour is come.

"Your hour is come," He said to them just now, but if it is their hour, still more is it His hour. Hence St. John afterwards wrote, *Knowing that His hour was come*. Yes, at last His long-desired hour is come, and He is able



to work out in detail the plan of redemption. In this hour then: *They have set Me as an abomination to themselves; I am delivered up, and I came not forth* (Psalm lxxxvii.). Why this change of plan? why pass through their hands previously and not now? For this reason, among many. That He foresees how, in time to come, men contemplating this scene, His chains, His bonds, His bruises, the drops of sweat gathered on His brow in consequence of the straitened cords—shall be powerfully attracted by the *almighty weakness of His goodness*. In their inmost hearts as they gaze on this prisoner, this bondsman, *this Man without help*, they will say and say most heartily: "Take, O Lord, take all my liberty!" He sees how enemies that one day loved to bind Him, shall be changed into devoted servants, and become so strengthened, so inebriated by His Sacred Passion, and His Blood, that they shall be able to say: *Now, behold, being bound in the Spirit, I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying that bands and afflictions wait me in Jerusalem. But I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself* (Acts xx.). Well may our Divine Saviour say: *I have made all things new*, if weak men, by looking at Him in His bonds, can be so filled with the virtue that comes out from Him that for His sake they can welcome chains, and *fear none of these things*.

M. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And so when the spirits of wickedness, and men their agents, resolve on binding Jesus, His Heart at once responds: "*Fiat mihi*"—be it done to Me according to your will. For He sees in this hour the long line of poor sinners, whose chains are to be upon them not only during the watches of one night and one day, but throughout the never-ending eternity; and He knows how His chains and bonds will break the everlasting chains of these hapless dupes of Satan; and how they, set free by His bonds, shall spend their eternity, not under the power of the

accursed spirits of darkness, but singing for ever and ever the canticles of gratitude and love: *Thou hast broken my bonds, I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise* (Psalm cxv.).

N. *They bound Him.*

He knows too that His faithful, after seeing Him bound, *as a man that hath no help*, will feel sure, when, on behalf of their persecuted brethren, they are crying out: *Let the groans of the fettered (gemitus compeditorum) come in before Thee*, that He never can forget His suffering little ones: since they know that we have not a *High Priest Who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things, like as we are* (Hebrews iv.).

O. *And they bound Him.*

Yes, and while He stands bound under the walls of His Holy City, in the moonlight, and among the olive-trees, and with the flaming torches waving round Him, and quite alone among His enemies—while *they looked and stared upon Me*—all this time He has the *joy set before Him*, which the comforting Angel brought back to His mind, that a long line of men and women, moved by this scene, and by the bonds and chains of His captivity, will not be content to be bound only by His precepts and commandments; but will add on other straiter shackles and more precious bonds, binding them closely to Him, and to His Holy Mother, in voluntary poverty, chastity of choice, and most willing and complete obedience.

All shall be made new, and man who heretofore said, *I will not serve*, now glories to style himself: *I, the prisoner of Jesus Christ* (Ephes. iii.).

P. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

"Alas, my Lord and my God, if Thou art bound, if Thy power is lessened by man's foolish will, so much the worse for me! so much the worse for us all.

"May Thy hands never be bound, Lord Jesus, our Saviour! May Thy enemy and our enemy never be able to say: *I have prevailed against Him!* May Thy Kingdom

come, Lord Jesus ! All the days of my life, let not my will but Thine be done, my Lord and my God."

*Let us sing a hymn to the Lord, let us sing a new hymn to our God. O Adonai, Lord, great art Thou, and glorious in Thy power, great in the OMNIPOTENT WEAKNESS OF THY GOODNESS, and no one can overcome Thee (Judith xvi.).*

*Q. They bound Him.*

The Holy Spirit speaks of the *bonds of darkness, the chains of darkness*. We must not forget that we habitually are bound in *bonds of darkness*. Too often are the things hidden from our eyes *that are to our peace*. Even our sins become hidden and we cease to see them. We have need to cry out earnestly : *From my hidden sins cleanse me, O Lord*. Hidden sins are preventing the love of our Lord from growing more rapidly in our soul. For ourselves then, and for our neighbours too, we must often beg heartily that the bonds of our Lord may deliver us from the bonds of darkness.

*R. They bound Him.*

Jesus, when He came as an Infant into this world, had before Him the whole earth ; all its cities, all its palaces. The blessed angels could prepare His cradle wherever it pleased Him. Out of all the dwelling-places existing, He selected the stable at Bethlehem with its Crib. Even so has He now chosen this spot, this hour, to stand here alone and friendless, and to be bound here, and chained and beaten and bruised here. For He knows that men will remember this hour and this place, and will look at Him in this condition, and that virtue will go out from Him to them. Therefore does He now stand meek and *dumb as a lamb before his shearer* (Isaiah liii.).

S. Holy Mary, Mother of God, in the stable you bound your divine Child in swathing bands. By those bands, and by the cords and chains that bind Him now, obtain grace for us to break loose from the bonds of sin.

Solve vincula reis,  
Profer lumen cecis.

Break the chains that bind,  
Bring light unto the blind.

### STATION III.

*Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away*  
(St. Mark xiv. 50).

Whither did the disciples go ? Where did they seek a refuge ? Tradition agrees with what we should naturally expect from the nature of the ground. Mount Olivet is behind them to the east. Some writers think that they took the road over this hill, in order to hide at Bethany. But is it likely that, eager to escape, they would face a high hill ? Then, secondly, the walls of Jerusalem are in front of them to the west, with a very steep pathway to be climbed, and they doubtless believe that the soldiers who came by that road, will return by the same. So that their flight would certainly not be in that direction. Then, on their right hand, the road from Gethsemani to the north, through the Valley of Josaphat, also suddenly becomes very steep. The only level road, then, is the remaining one on the left hand to the south. This one, according to tradition, they chose, and it seems natural that men in a state of terror would do so. Escape would appear to them impossible by any of the other three steep roads. On the south side of the city, the caverns are still shown in which the scared disciples hid themselves. Some of these have recently been purchased by a Religious Order in the hope that they may be made into a holy sanctuary.

*A. The disciples leaving Him, all fled away.*

We may follow them to their hiding-place, to contemplate their condition. Oh, what a night of trouble, of sorrow, of shame, of bewilderment, of remorse it is to them ! The little flock is scattered, and left without their Shepherd. Drawn closely to Him by a strong attracting grace, they have remained with Him in His temptations. Seeing His many miracles, they have acquired a supernatural dependence on Him. They have clung to Him, and borne with Him *the burden of the day and the heat*. Now, for the first time since they left all things to follow Him, there is a terrible separation. True, they were without Him on the sea, during the midnight storm ; but only for a short time. He soon came back to comfort them. And besides, on that night it was no fault of theirs that He was not with them. They had not fled away to leave Him a prisoner in the hands of His enemies. They went at His bidding into the boat, and very soon they found

Him again. But to-night they have all, by their own choice, fled away from Him and left Him alone among His enemies. Later in life, indeed, they will be able to look back with a calm sorrow and with grateful hearts upon this night; each of them will be able to say: "O Lord Jesus, it is good for me that Thou hast humbled me. *Before I was humbled, I offended* (Psalm cxviii.). In the Cenacle, alas, I said with so much senseless presumption: I am ready to die with Thee, Master. *I never will deny Thee.*" For when Simon Peter said it, *In like manner said they all* (St. Mark xiv.). And they will shed tears of loving contrition when they remember how meekly their Master urged them to pray, and warned them that, though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. "Ah me! little I knew how weak I was."

But to-night all is trouble and fear and remorse. Bitter tears are falling from their eyes. They have no mind now to sleep. *Wo, wo is me! the light of our eyes, the comfort of our life, is gone!* "O Master, we having all things together with Thee, ought not to have let Thee go from us" (Tobias x.). And now come back to their minds those terrible words He spoke so solemnly a week ago, which then made no impression: *We go to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes.*

"We could not believe it. So often have we seen Him deliver Himself out of their hands; we never thought that they could take Him. Wo, wo to us! For if this is come to pass, the rest too will all be true: *They shall condemn Him to death; He shall be crucified.* Oh! better for us to have been drowned that stormy night upon the sea, than live to go through this unhappy night! *Alas, alas! the breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken, and taken for our sins; to Whom we said so often: Under Thy shadow we shall live*" (Lament. iv.).

Some one, perchance the privileged one, *James, the brother of the Lord*, might suggest: "He gave us a sure promise that He would not leave us orphans". But the

answer comes too quickly: "He has not left us. It is we who have left Him. Oh, most dismal night!"

"How can we show ourselves any more in presence of the Blessed Mother? She will not look at us. She will turn her face away from us!"

All this while, their Divine Master is most mindful of His promise: *I will not leave you orphans.* He has given His angels a special charge over His little flock, to comfort them and guide them, and not suffer the spirits of wickedness to tempt them beyond their strength. Earnestly His most compassionate Heart has been pleading for them: "Father, forgive them". And His Most Holy Mother, who is in the closest union with Him, her heart beating with His, she too is, with all the tenderness of the best of mothers, pleading: "Father, forgive them".

Our Lord has good reason to say to the poor sinner, crushed by the thought of his sin: *Have confidence* (St. John xvi.). *For My thoughts are not your thoughts* (Isaiah lv.). It is the father of lies who tells you so urgently that I am the austere man who will take vengeance. But, *I know the thoughts that I think towards you: thoughts of peace and not of affliction.* You shall pray to Me, and I will hear you. You shall seek Me, and you shall find Me (Jerem. xxix.). Remember My word: *You now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice* (St. John xvi.).

## SCENE V.

### THE WAY OF CAPTIVITY.

#### STATION I.

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest* (v. 53).

A. Observe how quickly this story is told. How few words are needed. If we merely read and pass on, how little we know of what happened during the journey. The pages of the Holy Gospel are like the surface of the earth beneath which precious mines lie hid. With great reason does our Blessed Saviour call to us: "*O vos omnes*—O you

who are passing by, stay a little while to watch, to listen, to consider in your heart, and so find out the treasures hidden under the words that you have so often skimmed over, leaving the heavenly riches they contain unnoticed and unheeded."

### "Attitude."

Pause on your way; make this a halting-place.

The Priests have no intention of returning to the city by the straight steep path immediately in front of them. They came down by it, but will not go back by it, because they wish to have Jesus in their own keeping for the night; to examine Him at their leisure, and prepare their indictment against Him before they give Him up to the Romans. This they can do better in the palace of the High Priest. Instead, therefore, of directing their march straight up the steep path to the Golden Gate, they choose the road, so tradition tells us, which is now known as *the Road of the Captivity*. It ascends the precipitous side of Mount Moriah, but obliquely, bearing to the south. By this road they climb the hill, but at the same time pass down along the eastern wall to its southern extremity. They are, probably, going back into the city by the way along which our Saviour and His disciples walked from the Cenacle to the Garden. They enter into Jerusalem by a gate at the south-eastern angle, and pass through the lower quarter of the city called Ophel, south of Mount Moriah and the Temple. Here, as has been noted, the poor, who were more favourable to Jesus, had their dwelling-places.

Passing through Ophel, the Priests with the multitude arrive at the flight of steps leading up from the lower city to a gate through which they enter into what we may call the high town on Mount Sion. Going westwards from this gate for about a quarter of a mile, they arrive at the enclosure, within which stands the Palace of the Priests in the south-west corner of the city, about two hundred yards from the Cenacle where our Saviour supped.

Mount Sion is the highest part of the city. David was the first who gained possession of this stronghold, till then occupied by the Jebusites. The name Jerusalem is supposed by some writers to be a compound—formed out of the two names, Jebus and Salem. *David took the castle of Sion; the same is the city of David. And David dwelt in the castle, and called it the city of David* (2 Kings v.). The ground lying northward, a little lower than the fortress of Sion, is sometimes called "the Daughter of Sion."

Between Mount Sion and Mount Moriah on which the Temple stood, runs a very narrow valley called Tyropeoon. A bridge across this narrow valley connected the Temple with Mount Sion.

Some modern students are calling in question all these old traditions here given with regard to the position of Mount Sion. They bring arguments to prove that what is commonly called

Mount Moriah, on the eastern side of the city, was the ancient Sion. But this new theory is not accepted by those who seem best informed on questions of ancient topography; and the arguments adduced in favour of it are not convincing.

Following, then, the commonly received opinion, we can calculate that from Gethsemani to the Palace of the Priests, our Blessed Lord was dragged a distance of about a mile.

The way, as we have seen, for half the distance was up a very steep hill; and we may assume that the road was rough and rugged. It was not a highway for carriages. No carriage could be dragged up that steep. If the Romans have made a road for military purposes, it is a rugged one paved with rough-hewn blocks. If there is no Roman road, but only one of the ordinary bridle-paths, from the nature of the ground it is, most probably, very rocky and covered with loose stones.

### B. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

From what has been said, we can begin to form some notion of the amount of suffering which is hidden under these words: *They brought Jesus to the High Priest*. Very soon after starting they cross the torrent of Cedron. A tradition tells us that there the words of the roghth Psalm have their fulfilment: *He shall drink of the torrent in the way*. In one of the recorded revelations we read that the guards in charge of Him, either because the low and narrow bridge was crowded, or from sheer cruelty, threw Him into the torrent and dragged Him through it. The old tradition harmonises so far with this account, that we find the belief still existing that our Saviour, when He fell, left the impress of His knees on a stone in the brook.

### C. *He shall drink of the torrent in the way.*

From these words, must we conclude that our Saviour did actually drink of the water when He fell in the torrent? or is this only a figurative way of expressing that He was dragged through the water? Of one thing we may be quite sure, that after the profuse sweat of blood in the Garden, and all the extreme exhaustion of the preceding days, His agonising thirst has already set in; and our Blessed Saviour may have thought it well to slake His thirst a little.

If so, we cannot fail to see how dearly bought the

little refreshment is. The Prophet Amos wrote a word that often came true in the history of the Jews, and still more often during the persecutions of the Christian Church. *Your festival days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning* (c. viii.). We see, too, in the lives of the saints how even their repose and refreshment is mingled with mourning. And if we knew all the details of our Lord and our Lady's sojourn on earth, we should surely find that this is much more the case with them. Every hour of their life, even the hours of rest and refreshment, are all coloured by those tints of hallowed sorrow, which from Calvary are now spread over the whole of the redeemed world.

As we have seen, the Ever-Blessed Mother, if not present in body, is, through the light sent down on her from Heaven, witnessing every detail. As, then, kneeling by her side, we see her frame quiver when our Lord falls in the torrent, and how she sinks down prostrate with Him, we need not fear to speak to her, for she knows full well that our need is greater than her Son's; that the real sinners are more to be pitied than He Who only carries our sins and our griefs.

<i>Eia Mater, fons amoris,</i>	Holy Mother, source of love,
<i>Me sentire vim doloris,</i>	Send down sorrow from above,
<i>Fac ut tecum lugeam.</i>	That my heart may mourn with thee.

"Thy tears of compassion, Holy Mary, are thy Son's true refreshment. Obtain for our hard hearts some little share of thy holy grief."

D. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

*With desolation, the Prophet of Lamentation writes, with desolation is all the land made desolate because there is no one that considereth in the heart* (Jerem. xii.).

In contemplation we are endeavouring to consider in the heart; to use our reason, and to use, also, our heart, while we watch and listen.

And so, when we have but a few brief words set before us: *They brought Jesus to the High Priest*, we do not con-

fine ourselves to the minimum that lies on the surface, but endeavour, as wisely as we can, to reach to all that must be underlying this upper crust. This is what our masters in spiritual life exhort us to attempt. Helped by grace from above, we use our natural powers, and consider in our hearts the brief story given to us.

In order, then, to consider wisely in our hearts the journey of our Lord, we must help ourselves from other parts of the sacred narrative. From the known we must reach to the unknown.

From those portions, then, of the sacred story where more detail is given us, we see clearly that the men who have Jesus in their power, and that the spirits of wickedness who are guiding and directing, and most of all, that our Blessed Saviour Himself and the Eternal Father, wish an amount of suffering which is simply beyond all our power of measuring, to be crowded into the short watches of this night and of the morrow. We may therefore safely conclude that it is difficult, very difficult, for us to exaggerate the torments inflicted on our Saviour during His progress from Gethsemani to the house of the Priests.

We must not, however, forget that He is desiring every one of these torments, and most heartily welcomes them. So, too, doubtless, does His Blessed Mother heartily desire them as He does, and with Him welcomes them all. For she, too, knows that *the chastisement of our peace is upon Him*.

E. We gather, then, from the revelations vouchsafed to the holy, that during this journey, as on every other, our Saviour fell several times to the ground.

"*Attentite.*" Surely we may well stay a little while to contemplate one at least of these heavy falls.

They are dragging Him hurriedly up the rough and steep path. With His legs shackled and impeded, He cannot be properly said to walk; He is being dragged along, and His bare feet at every step are being bruised and wounded by the stones and the heavy boots of the

soldiers. His arms, tightly bound behind Him, can give Him no protection, no help. Therefore, whenever He falls, His sacred face is grievously bruised and wounded by the stones.

But the stones are not cruel enemies; they do no more than what needs must be. But men, with their hard hearts, add on much that is not necessary.

*Wickedness*, we have seen, is *fearful*, and fear is cruel. Jesus, their prisoner, is not in terror; but they, His masters, are in grievous terror, for they are excited and strained to the highest pitch by the fear that He will escape. "Make haste, guards; do it quickly; lead Him most carefully," are words frequently repeated with feverish impatience. And while they are in this state of frenzy, a false step, a stumble, still more, a sudden heavy fall to the ground, excites them as if it were an attempt to escape. And at once every stumble and every fall is mercilessly chafised, as if the prisoner had made a desperate attempt to rescue Himself.

They have clubs and staves in abundance, and they use them. The ropes, too, are not only useful to drag Him along, but to chastise Him grievously when He startles them by falling. We learn, too, from some revelations, that whenever He falls, it is by the hair of His Sacred Head that they drag Him to His feet again.

F. If, therefore, we consider in our hearts the wounds and bruises on His bare feet—from the stones, from the kicks, and from the heavy footsteps of the soldiers and servants; then also the bruises and wounds on His Head from the falls, and from the strokes of the ropes and sticks, and from the plucking out of His hair; also the multiplied wounds and bruises in His Body from heavy blows, and the tight cords and chains and ropes, we shall surely see that already even at this early stage of His Passion, the words of the Prophet are having their fulfilment in Him: *The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sad. From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein, wounds and bruises and swelling sores. They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil* (Isaiah i.).

And all this while, neither He nor His Blessed Mother wishes for one wound, one bruise the less. For they both have fixed in their hearts the words that strengthened Him in the Garden: *By His bruises we are healed. Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled* (Isaiah liii.).

G. "*Attendite*." Stay yet a little while watching and listening. Listen to the sound of His heavy fall; listen, too, to the sound of His sacred face striking against the rock. "Oh," He says to us with most humble and most meek Heart, as He lies prostrate, "*Tantus labor, non sit casus*. Let not My painful journey be all in vain, all without fruit. Stay with Me till virtue goes out from Me to you."

The sick woman said so wisely: *If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed* (St. Matt. ix.). Now, then, if I draw near and reverently look upon and touch, not His garment, but His sacred wounds and bruises, surely virtue will come out from Him more abundantly than from His seamless garment. As I see blow after blow bruising His Body, I shall gain strength to bear with some meekness the slight rebukes, the unkind words that have heretofore seemed to me so unbearable.

H. And also, as He falls to the ground, He says to me, and His Blessed Mother joins Him, "*Weep not for Me. Oh, there are worse falls than Mine. I saw Satan fall like lightning out of Heaven. I see My own disciples fall.*"

Let us think how grievously we have fallen, and think, too, of others who are fallen. If the bruises of His fallen Body heal the wounds of our fallen souls, great indeed will be His consolation.

I. And as we look on with pity and with sadness, while, with many curses and imprecations, they lift Him by the hair of His Head, His most loving Heart is saying to us: "Oh, do not be cruel to the fallen, *lest such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*" (2 Cor. ii.).

J. And as we see Him rise, and fall, rise again and again fall, and as again we hear the sound of the heavy

blows, and again hear the words of hatred, and again see the hair torn from His Sacred Head in the attempt to raise Him, once more He says to us, *Weep not over Me*, nor over My falls, for they are not too many; but weep over My little ones, who renounce Lucifer and go back to him, are forgiven and again go back to him: *The dog is returned to his vomit: the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire* (2 St. Peter ii.).

K. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

Here, too, we observe once more, as they drag Him with noise and tumult through the streets of Ophel, where the poor are living, how the inspired word is again proved to be true: *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.). Great care was to be taken, so they decreed, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And lo, in their senseless intoxication, they are doing the things most suited to cause a rising and a tumult, were not God's angels keeping the city.

L. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

While we contemplate our Divine Master thus dragged along by men, alas! we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit saying: *What is it that hath been? the same that shall be. What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.* This dismal scene has not passed away. It recurs and is perpetuated. We still possess a terrible power over our God, akin to that permitted on this night to these Jews, and we are men of the same fallen family that they were of. The same unseen spirits of wickedness are always urging us also to outrage Christ Jesus. What is there, St. Augustine asks, that one man does that another man may not do, if not helped by Him by Whom all men are made? We are all, as has been said, so created that none of us can walk alone, or exist by himself. Our God, Who created us, must ever instant keep us in being, must hold us together, must ward off annihilation, must maintain life and activity, and help us in every work we do, every word we speak, every thought we think. For *how could anything*

*endure if Thou wouldst not, or be preserved if not called by Thee?* (Wisdom xi.).

If, then, I lift my hand to feed myself, my Creator is helping me, else I could not do it. If I go upwards towards Heaven, or if I go downwards towards Hell; if I travel in the morning to meet the sunrise; if I walk on the land or sail on the sea, everywhere, O my God, *shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.* So that if I abuse the free-will and the power given to me by the great God Who made me, I not only sin in His presence, under His eye, and before His face—*malum coram te feci*—but I am actually using the help He is giving me against Him. I am using His assistance to offend Him grievously, and to give Him infinite displeasure in the presence of all His enemies.

M. *When thou shalt be old*, Jesus said a few days later to St. Peter, *thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall bind thee and lead thee where thou wouldst not.* With the great God there is no old age, no decrepitude. It is while He is in the full glory of His eternal strength and power and wisdom and holiness, that I, a foolish, senseless sinner, bind Him, and lead Him whither He would not. I make use of His co-operation as if He were my tool, my instrument, to do my own bad will, and to sin against Him.

Hence this most meek and humble expostulation of our Lord addressed to us: *I have not caused thee to serve with oblations, nor wearied thee with incense. But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities* (Isaiah xliii.). But because He is ever a *gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.), He adds at once, *I am, I am He that blot out thy iniquities for My own sake, and I will not remember thy sins* (Isaiah xliii.). And then with the infinite condescension of a Father Who is both Creator and Redeemer, He adds: *Put Me in remembrance, and let us plead together; tell if thou hast anything to justify thyself* (Isaiah xliii.). I will not then spend my time in casting stones at these

stiff-necked Jews, but I will strike my breast as I contemplate, and say again and again in humility, *Peccavi*. "I have sinned, my God, and done evil before Thee. For I have made Thee serve me in my sins, and have wearied Thee with my iniquities."

## STATION II.

*A certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body: and they laid hold on him. But he casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked* (vv. 51, 52).

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who records this incident. If it had no other importance, still it would help us to see how one holy writer is not merely transcribing the Gospel of another. We might be inclined to think that St. Mark's Gospel is merely an abridgment of St. Matthew's. But in his narrative we meet with many words and facts not found elsewhere. St. Peter, who was his guide as he wrote, probably remembered this fact and communicated it to St. Mark.

### A. *They laid hold on him.*

This fact shows that our Blessed Lord's enemies are in a feverish, excited state, and quite ready to seize all His disciples, if so permitted. But every hair of their head is numbered. *If you seek Me, let these go their way.* This is His command; and so it shall be done. They have leave to seize and bind Jesus; but not the disciples, nor any one else; and therefore not this young man. *Thou art my Protector and my Refuge, my God.* For the present, no one is to be struck or wounded by the hand of man on account of Jesus; He must tread the wine-press alone. Later, they shall be bound and bruised and slain for His sake. In this hour those who love Him—and high above all the rest, His Ever-Blessed Mother—shall suffer through compassion. Love shall wound them; but not the hand of His enemies.

### B. *But he casting off the linen cloth, fled away naked.*

So we read the holy Patriarch Joseph, when the wicked woman caught the skirt of his garment, *he leaving the garment in her hand, fled, and went out.* Our forefathers had

to leave home and country and friends and possessions to flee away to save their faith. Happy they who at the voice of God, and at the voice of conscience, are ready to cast off all and follow the friendly warning.

"By Thy bitter Passion, O Lord, give strength to those whom Thou art calling into Thy Church, that they may have courage to follow the call; and not go away sad because they have peace in their possessions."

### *A certain young man.*

The question is asked who this young man was. Some writers answer that he was St. James, others say St. John. But others again consider these conjectures quite improbable, since St. Mark in the sentence immediately preceding writes, *Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away.* Moreover, they think it very unlikely in any of the Apostles would have come from the Cenacle attired in this way. It seems more probable that he was of those who resided in one of the houses near the Garden, and, being waked from his sleep by the tumult, came out to see what was going on; and having probably known our Lord, who often resorted to this Garden, was interested in His fate, and followed to see what might happen.

## SCENE VI.

### THE HOUSE OF ANNAS.

*But they holding Jesus, led Him to Caiaphas the High Priest, where the Scribes and Ancients were assembled* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest; and all the Priests and Scribes and the Ancients assembled together* (St. Mark xiv.).

*And apprehending Him, they led Him to the High Priest's house* (St. Luke xxii.).

*And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the High Priest of that year* (St. John xviii.).

### *And they led Him to Annas first.*

In these four narratives we notice that St. Matthew states that they led Him to Caiaphas. St. Mark seems to agree with St. Matthew's account. He does not indeed mention Caiaphas by name; but when he states that they led Him to the High Priest, and immediately adds that *the Priests and Scribes and*



*Ancients assembled*, we naturally understand that he is speaking of Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year, at whose house the members of the Sanhedrim met. That they met there we learn from St. Matthew's statement, and also from other passages in the Gospels.

St. Luke's narrative also we naturally, though not necessarily, interpret as meaning that they led Him to Caiphas, the High Priest of the year. St. John, however, writing much later, and with a view to supplying some details omitted by the other Evangelists, and clearing up some obscurities, mentions distinctly the fact passed over in silence by the other three Evangelists, that *they led Him first to Annas*. He adds in verse 24: *And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest.*

There can be no doubt that St. John's account is the more complete one. All commentators agree that our Saviour was led first to the House of Annas.

But at this point, a question arises with regard to which their opinions differ.

How long did our Lord remain there, and what incidents took place in the house of Annas? Some of the ablest and most esteemed interpreters, such as Father à Lapide, and Father Toletus, S.J., afterwards Cardinal, think that no stay at all was made at the house of Annas; that the Priests and Ancients took Jesus to his door, or sent Him thither closely guarded, while they went to make preparations for their Council, merely in order that Annas, who was the arch-enemy of Jesus, and the guiding spirit of this attack upon Him, might have the satisfaction of seeing Him a prisoner.

These interpreters consider that the words of St. John, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, need not necessarily be considered to stand exactly in the context to which they belong. Historians sometimes, they say, write parenthetically a sentence of this kind: "I should have mentioned that Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas." They consider that this is St. John's meaning. They quote, too, a passage which we have already considered, namely, the words of St. Matthew and St. Mark, where, after relating that Judas came with the armed multitude, St. Matthew adds: *He that betrayed Him gave them a sign*, but St. Mark writes: *He that betrayed Him had given them a sign*. Here, they argue, it is evident that the Evangelists, whether they say *gave* or *had given* (*ἔδωκεν*, *ἐδόκεν*), do not mean to fix exactly the moment when Judas determined on this signal. So now, too, they say, St. John when he writes, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, does not intend to fix the moment when Annas sent Him, but only to state the fact that he did send Him. Consequently the words may mean, Annas had already sent Him. So then, according to this view, Annas after just satisfying his eyes by looking at Jesus in chains, sent Him on at once to Caiphas and the members of the Sanhedrim. Cardinal Toletus, who is a careful and very learned commentator, adduces in confirmation

of this opinion the fact that St. Cyril evidently quotes from a copy of the Gospel in which this passage differed from our Vulgate, as the words in question, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, occur immediately after the words, *They led Him first to Annas*.

These commentators who thus depart from the more obvious and natural interpretation of St. John's narrative, do so because they find it difficult to reconcile what comes after in St. John's account with what is written by the other Evangelists. For St. John seems to record the first denial of St. Peter as taking place in the house of Annas; whereas the other Evangelists represent all the denials as taking place in the house of Caiphas. Added to this, that St. John uses the expression, *The High Priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine*. They take for granted that this title, the High Priest, signifies Caiphas, and no other.

Against this interpretation, however, there is this weighty argument, that we are so often told by our guides and masters that St. John is more exact in fixing time than the other Evangelists are; and that he aims more than they do at preserving the right chronological order.

Then with regard to the title, *the High Priest*, it is quite clear that St. John gives the title to others besides Caiphas. Thus, chapter xix. 6, though our English version has these words: *The chief Priests cried, Crucify Him*, whereas it gives to Caiphas the title *the High Priest*; yet in the Greek and Latin text we find no such distinction. Caiphas is the Pontifex, *ἀρχιερεῖς*; and the Priests who cry "Crucify" are Pontifices, *ἀρχιερεῖς*. The only difference that St. John makes when he speaks of Caiphas, is that he calls him *the High Priest* (Pontifex, *ἀρχιερεῖς*) of that year.

From what we have already seen it is clear that in consequence of the despotic tyranny of Herod the Great, and of the Romans who deposed several High Priests, and would not permit them to hold the office for life as their predecessors had done, there were now in Jerusalem many who kept the title of High Priests.

When for instance St. John writes: *The High Priests and servants cried, Crucify Him*, these words certainly imply that there were present a considerable number of High Priests.

Among these deposed High Priests Annas was eminent; because he had been rightly appointed, and had held the office for some years, and was still considered the High Priest *de jure*. Moreover, he was learned in the law, and a man of authority. When therefore St. John writes that *the High Priest* questions Jesus, there is no reason why we may not suppose that he is speaking of Annas, and not of Caiphas.

With regard to St. Cyril's text of the Holy Gospels, it is enough to say that Holy Church has preferred the Vulgate, which seems to state clearly that our Lord remained some time in the house of Annas.

Then lastly, with regard to the difficulties which arise out of the denials of St. Peter, one suggestion found in the writings of Euthymius, and adopted by some modern commentators, seems to offer a satisfactory solution.

If, according to this suggestion, we suppose that the house or palace of the High Priest was a large building, such as would have befitted the office, before it was degraded by Herod and the Romans, it would not be unnatural to suppose that Caiphas, the High Priest of the year, had his abode either in the centre of the building or in one of the wings; and that Annas, his father-in-law, and the most eminent man among the High Priests, had his home in the other wing of the building, or in some adjacent building within the enclosure. The traditional sites still pointed out for the two houses are near enough to admit of this supposition. If we admit this conjecture, then we shall have *one gateway and one courtyard (atrium) common to both houses*.

Arrived then at the great gateway, we may suppose, a certain portion of the multitude disperse and go home. We are not obliged to believe that the whole Roman cohort of six hundred or a thousand men, and the whole crowd of servants and retainers all make their way into the Palace. As soon, then, as the gates are opened, a sufficient guard of soldiers, doubtless, with the servants, enter, first, into the covered hall wherein was the porter's lodge, and thence pass into the *atrium* or courtyard, which is surrounded by a covered colonnade or corridor, but in the centre is open to the air. Here many of the servants remain; and here St. Peter and the other disciples afterwards join them.

Meanwhile the guards, obeying the orders of Caiphas, or other Priests, lead our Lord to the wing of the building in which Annas lives. It is believed that he is now already far advanced in years, and therefore had not taken part in the proceedings at Gethsemani. He is supposed to have been disturbed from his sleep by the escort who brought Jesus to him, and by Judas, who was anxious to receive his money.

This opinion, which is adopted in the chapter that follows, avoids all difficulties arising out of St. Peter's denials. For, according to this theory, they all take place, as we shall see, in the *atrium* which is common to both the two houses—the house of Annas and the house of Caiphas.

#### *They led Him away to Annas first.*

From what we have already seen, it is probably about half an hour after midnight when they reach the house of Annas. Consequently, the supposition that the old man had retired to rest and is asleep is not improbable. It is fully supported by a tradition which still survives in Jerusalem, that in order to prevent all possibility of escape, the soldiers and servants in charge bound Jesus tightly to an olive-tree, while they were waiting till the High Priest was ready to receive them. An olive-tree is still pointed out, as growing on the spot where our Lord was then bound.

#### STATION I.

##### *A. They led Him to Annas first.*

We may then stay a little while to look at our Blessed Saviour bound by His own people to the olive-tree. It was at this hour of midnight that He broke the bonds of their slavery in Egypt. At this hour, too, the Word became Flesh through love for His people. At this hour He appeared in the midst of His chosen people, as a little Child, in the stable, hoping thus to win their hearts. At this hour He escaped out of the grasp of the tyrant Herod, who was their cruel enemy and murdered their children. Now they have bound Him fast to the tree, and He in His Heart is saying to Sion: *Put Me in remembrance, and let us plead together, tell if thou hast anything to justify thyself* (Isaiah xliii.). *Many good works have I showed you from My Father: for which of these works do you bind Me to the olive-tree?*

B. What a heavenly revenge is the revenge of our Lord Jesus! Many and many a time—times without number, will He despatch His ministers in the midnight hour, to soothe with the consecrated oil of His olive-tree, the soul of the man that is about to die and go to judgment.

C. And, as He stands bound, He is remembering too, how in the years that are future to men, but present to Him, poor sufferers without number will be lying sleepless in their sick-beds, or in prison, or homeless on the frozen earth; and His image as He stands there chained, and wounded, and bruised, worn by fatigue and exhaustion, and tormented with excessive thirst, will bring grace and consolation to their midnight sorrows. For His wish is to leave no moment of the night or day without its special balm and oil, which sufferers can draw from the fountains of their Saviour.

Anima Christi, sanctifica me,  
Corpus Christi, salva me,  
Passio Christi, conforta me.

D. "Lord Jesus, bound to the olive-tree, Holy Mary is Thy olive-tree. For ever she will be with Thee, at Thy side, like the fair and beautiful olive-tree of the plain."

## STATION II.

### THE HOUSE OF ANNAS—THE INSIDE.

*The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine (St. John xviii. 19).*

A. It was with Annas, we are told, that the traitor made his bargain. It is from him that he expects the wages of sin. Naturally, therefore, he is here with the foremost, eager to be the first, and to let his great chief know how well he has laid his plans and carried them out; and how reasonable it is to double and treble his fee. But if he expects fair words and generous gratitude from this hoary contriver and abettor of wickedness, who will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven himself, nor suffer others to enter, he will be grievously disappointed—the desire of the wicked shall perish. The venom of the asp is under the arch-sinner's tongue; and Judas receives in plenty curses and words of hatred for disturbing his rest.

Christ does not suffer the eye of the widow to wait for the alms she wants, but it pleases the malicious High Priest well to torture the traitor with hope deferred, and to reduce the promised wages of sin to the very least that can be.

B. After some delay, then, the hoary Chief of the Ancients is ready, and Jesus is unbound from the tree, and hurriedly dragged into the presence of the High Priest. Possibly, too, some of the ropes and cords that might hinder Him from speaking are by the command of Annas loosened, that the prisoner may be better able to answer his subtle questions. This conjecture is suggested by the words that we shall meet with presently. *Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas.* For these words may mean that His chains and bonds are once more adjusted and fastened before He is sent off. Some writers say that, according to

ordinary usage, the chains of prisoners were removed while they were in presence of their judge; but that terror lest He should escape deprived Jesus of this relaxation.

C. *The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine.*

Annas is a man considered learned and well versed in Jewish law. He is, moreover, old, and very experienced and shrewd. As has been said, he has been the leader, the ruling director among the Antichrists. He knows quite well that he is not the judge who is to preside at the trial of Jesus. That is the work of Caiaphas. But Joseph Caiaphas, his son-in-law, is a child in iniquity compared with himself. Therefore he thinks he will be rendering a great service to the Council, if by clever questions he can elicit answers that shall deserve death and crucifixion. Only forty-eight hours have gone by since the best of his comrades spent the livelong day in the attempt to catch Jesus in His speech. Their labour was utterly useless, but Annas had not then brought his own intellect and legal shrewdness to bear: he had remained in the background advising and directing. Now it is his turn to enter the lists. *O man, St. Paul exclaims, who art thou that repliest against God?* "O foolish wise man," we may say to Annas, "who art thou that dares to question thy God?" He will find, as all others have done, that there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.

D. *The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine.*

*Of His disciples*, in order to be able to prove to Pilate that Jesus has secretly been gathering together a powerful and dangerous party.

*Of His doctrine*, that he may be able to convict Him of subverting the Law of Moses.

The Holy Ghost has long ago revealed (Wisdom ii.) a very detailed description of what is to go on this night in the arraignment of Christ Jesus.

One part of the programme of these judges is: *Let us*

*lie in wait for the Just.* This is what Annas is proposing to do now. He is going to lay snares for Jesus, by his capacious questions. But in vain!

Our Lord knows that Annas is not God's delegate in this Court. He is not the appointed official judge. He is volunteering private, amateur inquiry which will not speed on the work of redemption. Annas will only fitter away precious moments, and multiply sins. The loving Heart of Jesus will cut short this mischievous delay.

### STATION III.

*Jesus answered Him: I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort, and in secret have I spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold, they know what things I have said (vv. 20, 21).*

*A. In secret I have spoken nothing.*

Yet we know that our Saviour spoke by night with Nicodemus: and a week ago *He took unto Him the Twelve*, and told them in private what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem. Moreover, He has this very night held a long discourse to His disciples only, at the Supper. Then besides, did He not charge His Apostles to preach hereafter from the housetops what they had heard from Him in secret? This, then, is one of the many passages in our Lord's Gospel which teach us the necessity of reading the words with reverent care and humility, and of seeking the aid of a master while we read.

His meaning is that He has not in secret taught any doctrines other than those which He has preached publicly. All His Creed and all His Code are fully known.

*B. Why askest thou Me?*

His answer, then, is an unanswerable rebuke to the judge who is questioning Him. If Annas knows the law, he surely ought to know this much, that it is not legal

to bind and chain a man first, as guilty of blasphemies, and then begin to examine him on his doctrine, in order to find out matter for accusation. Witnesses ought to be ready who have heard him preach treason or blasphemy.

Annas is silenced, utterly silenced and confounded. This illegal and useless questioning is brought suddenly and peremptorily to an end. Our Saviour is now, as heretofore, *teaching as one having power.*

The great leader, the expert in the law, the chief guide and ruler in the conspiracy against Jesus, is proved to be ignorant of his duty; and his troubled face shows the confusion and vexation that is working within.

*C. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken.*

The Beloved Disciple tells us that when Jesus went forth in the Garden to meet the multitude, *He went forth knowing all things that should come upon Him.* He knew, therefore, among the rest, all that was to pass at the house of Annas. Now, therefore, He is fully conscious of all that this just and necessary and fearless answer shall bring upon Him.

*"Attendite."* Here, then, we may well stay and look at our Blessed Saviour in wonder, and listen in most reverent astonishment till we find virtue coming out from Him to us, and feel that His Sacred Passion is strengthening us.

*Fear not*, was one of our Saviour's injunctions to His disciples. *Beware of men*, but *fear them not.* How often and how often we lack the freedom and the courage of our Master when we are in presence of men!

Have we no duty to the absent maligned within our hearing? Owe we nothing to the souls of our own brethren, the children of our own Father, when they are being scandalised before us by irreligious words, by immodest words, by calumnies against the religion of our Lord?

Guiltily silence is one of the ways by which we become

partners in the sins of others. Those who hold authority are specially liable to incur guilt by a weak and sinful silence. *His watchmen*, the Prophet complains, *are all blind; they are all ignorant, dumb dogs, not able to bark* (Isaiah lvi.).

If we are blind and ignorant, and do not know the right word to speak when religion is attacked, we are causes of scandal.

It is while contemplating the Sacred Passion that we understand how wide the difference is between meekness and weakness.

A modest Christian child like St. Agnes can truly say in presence of her judges: *I have understood more than all my teachers. I have had understanding above Ancients* (Psalm cxviii.).

#### STATION IV.

*And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest Thou the High Priest so? (v. 22).*

A. St. John Chrysostom and other early Fathers seem to take for granted that this servant is Malchus. Possibly a tradition to this effect had reached them.

If so, Malchus remembers his wound more than his cure. Our Blessed Saviour's Heart, on the contrary, is ready to forget and forgive all we do against Him, but remembers for ever the little services we render.

"O Jesus, make our hard hearts like to Thine."

B. St. Cyril conjectures, on the other hand, that the servant is one of those who on a previous occasion were sent to apprehend Jesus, and came back saying: *Never did man speak like this Man*. For uttering such a word, he has been, ever since, under a cloud, and is now anxious to win back favour by special zeal for the honour of the aged High Priest. His servility goes beyond what his master does, but perhaps not beyond what he would like to do.

If this be true, we may learn a lesson from this wicked

prudence. If this servant is eager to undo the good he has done by much evil-doing now, how much more wise and more pleasant, too, it will be for us to repair the wrongs we have done to our Master by multiplying good works in His honour.

C. *One of the servants gave Him a blow.*

Our English version does not tell us as much as the Latin does. *Alapa* conveys to us the notion of a slap in the face with the open hand. Many commentators, either from revelations made or from tradition, think that it was not a slap in the face from a naked hand, but from a gauntlet. They think that this is clear from the image on St. Veronica's veil. If this be so, the servant is one of the Temple guards, who are armed.

Careful writers tell us that the blow is so heavy that our Saviour falls to the ground under it. If we bear in mind the exhausted state in which He came to His Passion, and then the increase of weakness caused by great loss of Blood, and all the torture of His journey from Gethsemani, it is not hard to believe that He is struck down to the ground. For ordinarily during His Passion, He allows natural causes to have their full effect on His Sacred Body; and only checks and limits the counteracting power of His Divinity.

D. *One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.*

Is our Saviour conquered by being felled to the ground? Human wisdom would answer, Yes, unless He calls down fire from heaven on the sacrilegious offender. But our Saviour replies: *My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways* (Isaiah lv.). His method is to conquer by meekness, by endurance. Perfect meekness, according to His Gospel, is perfect victory. If we give way to anger and resentment even a little, we spoil in some degree the glory of our victory. If we give way entirely to revenge, we are ourselves entirely conquered by him who has struck us.

"Attendite." This is one of the high and more difficult

lessons of the Gospel of Christ. When, through the virtue that comes out from Christ, a martyr is able to say on behalf of those who are stoning him, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, this miracle worked by the grace of Jesus Christ brings forcibly home to us what St. Paul calls the *subsequent greatness of His power towards us* (Ephes. i.).

Again and again we must say with unshaken hope: *Passio Christi, conforta me*—"Crucified Jesus, strengthen me".

#### E. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.

While contemplating this heavy blow, is it not the time to pray earnestly for an increase of devotion to the sacred Face of Jesus?

What a powerful prayer we have in the words of the Psalmist: *O God, our Protector, look down upon us, and on the Face of Thy Christ* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

And how earnestly the Ever-Blessed Mother responds to us: "O my child, look thou also on the Face of thy Christ, thy Jesus, thy Brother, thy Surety, thy Lord and thy God. Look on His bruised Face, for in His bruises thou art healed."

#### F. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.

As this is done by a servant in the presence of his master, unless the High Priest rebukes with condign severity the lawless outrage, he becomes by guilty silence a partner in the sin. As men are so prone to be slavish in presence of those in power, masters can oftentimes, if they will, easily repress evil. *The king that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil by his look* (Prov. xx.). But Annas utters not one word of reproof. This servant is to him a friend in need. He has stepped in at the moment when his master is put to the blush, and covered with confusion by the wise answer of Jesus.

Let us learn a lesson. To save his master from confusion, this slave commits a great crime. The disciples of Jesus have often been so strengthened that they have courageously screened their neighbour from confusion and

danger, by bringing chastisement on themselves. Our proto-martyr, St. Alban, put on the dress of the one sentenced to death, and died a martyr in his place. Even before he had seen the Sacred Passion, the blind man restored to sight brought great trouble on himself by speaking a courageous word on behalf of Jesus. Alas! have I ever, on the contrary, brought confusion and pain most unjustly to others, by screening myself and denying my own guilt?

#### G. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.

Let us watch with our eyes and mark how Jesus is first struck down, and then beaten because He falls, and dragged by the hair of His Head to His feet again.

*The anger of man worketh not the justice of God* (St. James i.).

Even so, at times, a timid child is corrected with so much anger and severity that fear brings a lie of excuse to its lips, and then the severity and chastisement is doubled and trebled because the terrified child has told a lie.

#### STATION V.

*Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me?* (v. 23).

A. The Heart of our Saviour has compassion on these enslaved and blinded servants, who worship their blind guides on earth, and have no fear or worship for their God.

By His calm and fearless fortitude, He is saying to them: "*Sussum corda*"—"Fear not, ye children of God, your earthly masters. *Fear not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in Hell* (St. Matt. x.).

All through the Sacred Passion, He is teaching by word, by work, by suffering. He is the Priest teaching, as well as the Victim suffering.

The firm and reasonable answer of our Saviour has produced the desired effect. Annas has no longer any wish to

waste the precious moments by asking his clever questions. He has been publicly disgraced; and the gross illegal outrage committed against Jesus will not help to restore his prestige as a *master in Israel*. He is glad to escape from his position, and to throw the heavy burden and difficult task on another. For what task can be so difficult or what burden so heavy, as the hopeless task of finding guilt in Him in Whom *there is no sin, and Who taketh away the sins of the world?*

"Take Him to the High Priest," he says hurriedly, "as the case does not concern me. I am not the judge. Away with Him! make haste! do it quickly."

B. Our Blessed Lady says meekly to us, "If my Son Jesus has spoken evil to thee, or done evil to thee, give testimony of the evil. But if He has spoken well and done well to thee, why strikest thou Him?"

## SCENE VII.

FROM ANNAS TO CAIPHAS.

## STATION I.

*And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest*  
(St. John xviii. 24).

A. It is probably about an hour after midnight when Annas gives this order. "*Attendite*." With our eyes let us look at our Saviour standing, *dumb as a lamb before his shearer*, while they quickly make fast every rope, every cord, every chain, and every fetter. We must try to measure the pain and torment caused by every fresh knot made, and every tightening of the cords. We must notice His swollen and livid face, bruised by the heavy blow. He goes out in a worse plight than when He came in, and more the Man of Sorrows. The prophetic word is being already very much verified, *the whole head sick, the whole heart sad*.

"Our Father Who art in Heaven, look on the Face of Thy Christ. Look on all His wounds and forgive us our sins. Mother of God, look on the Face of thy Christ and pray for us sinners."

*To Caiphas the High Priest.*

There are, as we have seen, many High Priests or Chief Priests. Caiphas, no doubt, has a pre-eminence, but they are all styled Pontifices and Principes Sacerdotum, as much as Joseph Caiphas is. This being so, would our version be more correct, if it were written, *to the High Priest Caiphas* or *to High Priest Caiphas*? When there are many captains, we do not say to Titus the Captain, but to Captain Titus, Captain Caius. It may be argued, however, that, as Caiphas is *the High Priest of this year*, he has a right to a special title: *Caiphas the High Priest*. Otherwise the correct form would appear to be: High Priest Caiphas: High Priest Annas. This is noted on account of the opinion of those who contend, that the High Priest who questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine must have been Caiphas.

*B. Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest.*

The journey this time is short, through the grounds, as we are supposing, within the enclosure. Probably the way lies through the outer court, where the servants are assembled, and where by this time Peter has perhaps arrived. From this court Jesus is dragged up the steps that lead to the central hall, for the court is *below*, as St. Mark tells us. Here, in the judgment-hall, Caiphas and a certain number of the Sanhedrim are impatiently waiting.

Short as the journey is, we may be sure, while contemplating, that the sufferings of Jesus are neither few nor light. Their aim is to lead Him hurriedly and carefully. Strong men are holding the two chains attached to the collar round His neck. Strong men, too, are holding the chains or ropes round His waist. Some writers think that, according to custom, each leg or arm is chained to a slave or a soldier, to render security more secure. The Rulers *have devised vain things*, precautions most useless.

"Not out of necessity, O Lord our Saviour, art Thou going to judgment, but solely because Thou wiltest by Thy hands to break our chains."

Daniel speaks of our Lord as *Christum Ducem*. "Be Thou ever, Lord Jesus, our leader! May we never be blind guides leading our blind selves. May we never give ourselves up as slaves to be led by wicked men."

C. *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas.*

Is Judas still leading and guiding? Our enlightened masters think not. His little hour of importance has come to an end. It is thought that he has stayed behind to wing his poor pay from the unwilling grasp of Annas. One strong reason for this conjecture is that the presence of Judas in the courtyard with the servants cannot well be reconciled with all that is narrated of St. Peter. Judas would at once have convicted him.

The unhappy traitor is then arguing, and entreating, and enforcing his claims to larger pay; describing all the dangers he has run; insinuating that all is not safe yet; that his services may still be wanted. But in vain! Once more, *the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Annas slowly and grudgingly counts the pieces one by one; and Judas puts them one by one into the scrip whence he has so often stolen the pittance of the poor. When, therefore, he finds that there is no hope whatever of extracting one piece more from him who is his match in covetousness and wickedness, he begins to feel that his *summer is ended*. The traitor's office and importance is no more. And as he goes out into a lonely place to count once more his gains, and to look again at the price of blood, the word of the Psalm comes true: *The wicked shall see and shall be angry, he shall gnash with his teeth and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). O Judas! What have you lost? What have you gained?

D. "Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, that we may not betray Him and sell Him for a vile recompense."

## SCENE VIII.

THE HALL OF CAIPHAS.

STATION I.

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest; and all the Priests and the Ancients and Scribes assembled together* (St. Mark xiv. 53).

A. *All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

According to the opinion of judicious commentators the members of the Great Council of the Sanhedrim who were known to be favourable to Jesus, such as Nicodemus, Joseph, and Gamaliel, had not been summoned to this midnight Council. Still so many are present that the Evangelist writes: *All the Priests and Ancients and the Scribes assemble.*

We may, however, observe that St. Matthew and St. Mark are the only Evangelists who record the transactions of the court held at midnight; and that these two Evangelists, on the other hand, do not give the details of the second sitting held early in the morning, which are recorded only by St. Luke.

St. Matthew, therefore, and St. Mark may perhaps be considered to be speaking inclusively of both sittings when they say that *all* were present. The common opinion of students seems to be that at the morning council there is a fuller gathering of the Sanhedrim; and that at the first sitting only the more active and bitter enemies of Jesus are present.

St. John, after recording that Annas sent Jesus to Caiphas, says nothing more of the nocturnal proceedings against our Lord in the court of Caiphas.

B. *All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

"Alas!" exclaimed our dying Cardinal, eminent in Church and State, "had I but served my God as I have served my King!" These Jewish Rulers have been working hard for several days in this warfare against Jesus; but



they are ready still to give up their night's rest. When all is over to-morrow night their wives and daughters will compassionate them, and offer them refreshing cordials after so much hard labour. The Holy Spirit tells us that, if they die impenitent, they will spend their eternity making this moan: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways. What hath pride profited us? (Wisdom v.). We fools! The serpent deceived me.*

"Mother of God, thou art wakeful and watching to-night with thy Divine Son. Pray for us poor sinners, that we may begin to toil and watch for His sake as willingly as His enemies work and watch to harm Him."

*C. All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

Thanks be to the Passion and Death of Christ, all things have been made new. Countless men and women have had the grace to work and watch for Christ's sake, even as His enemies do against Him. His word is fulfilled: *In the day-time the Lord hath commanded His mercy; and a canticle to Him in the night (Psalm xli.).* By day they work for His poor and for sinners; and at night, gathered round the altar of the Hidden God, they sing the praises of our God Who created us, our God Who redeemed us, the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies us.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." *In the day-time His mercy, and a canticle to Him in the night.*

STATION II.

*And the Chief Priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvi. 59).*

A. While some have been arranging the arrest of Jesus, others have been running about to find false witnesses to depose against Him. With promises and bribes and threats they have laboured hard to get evidence ready

for this midnight arraignment. The Scribes and Priests are experts in the law. They know that no man *that* is to be slain shall die but *by the mouth of two or three witnesses* (Deut. xvii.). One will not suffice. Therefore they have most actively and diligently sought throughout the city for witnesses.

*B. They sought false witnesses.*

*Heresy* is a Greek word that means "picking out." A heretic picks out of the Gospel so much as pleases him, and disregards the rest. Oftentimes we are in our *practice* heretical. Our Blessed Saviour, three days ago, strongly inveighed against the Priests and Ancients: *Wo to you, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law.* They must have witnesses, this the law prescribes; and the proceedings are to be judicial. Annas was out of order in his unprofessional questions, but this is to be an official act of the Council. There must be legality. There must be witnesses. So much they pick out from the law. But they turn their back upon the command: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* They ignore the precept: *Thou shalt not receive the voice of a lie (Exodus xxiii.).* They forget entirely what is written: *If a lying witness stand against a man accusing him of transgressions—when after most diligent inquiry they shall find that the false witness hath told a lie against his brother, they shall render to him as he meant to do to his brother. Thou shalt not pity him, but shalt require life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (Deut. xix.).* If they accepted and venerated the whole law, they would know that they themselves and their suborned witnesses ought, for this night's work, to be crucified, because they are using false witnesses to bring about the death of Jesus by crucifixion. Heresy that picks out one truth, and leaves aside many, is the arch-enemy of truth; and virtue that rigidly enforces a minor precept and sets at naught the great commandments of God's law, is vicious hypocrisy.

C. *The Chief Priests sought false witnesses.*

*Oh, how is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed ! (Lament. iv.).*

In the days of Moses it was prescribed : whenever there is a hard and doubtful matter in judgment, and thou see the words of the judges vary, thou shalt come to the Priests and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall show thee the truth of the judgment, and thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say that preside in the place that the Lord shall choose, neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor to the left (Deut. xvii.).

The judgment of the Priest is to be so truthful that you must not decline from it to the right hand nor to the left. And now all the Priests are seeking false witnesses. This is one proof among many that their knell has rung. The time foretold by Malachy is come. The Lord is saying to the Priests of the Levitical order : *I have no pleasure in you.* It was during the first watch of this night that the Lord of glory—now a prisoner—established the new Priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech. These High Priests are His no more. *I will not receive a gift from your hands. This is to you. O Priests, who despise My name (Malach. i.).*

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for the Church of thy Son, committed to thy guardianship, that His Priests may be clothed with justice and may not betray truth !”

### STATION III.

*The Chief Priests sought false witnesses against Jesus, but they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. For many bore false witness against Him, and their evidence was not agreeing (St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).*

A. *Many false witnesses had come in, and their evidence was not agreeing.*

Though the night is far spent, yet the Priests and Ancients have worked so earnestly that they have got together many witnesses.

One zealous Ancient has brought in a witness to swear that Jesus forbade the people to pay tribute to Cæsar. Another has found men ready to prove that He was stirring the people to sedition.

Several of the Scribes and Priests have come across witnesses who can render signal service, because they can bring forward very strong cases in which Jesus set at nought the Law of Moses. He violated the Sabbath grossly. He would not allow the adulteress to be punished. He consorted with scandalous sinners. And whereas the Law enjoins : *With all thy heart fear the Lord and reverence His Priests,* Jesus of Nazareth has habitually, before the people, reviled the Priests and brought them into contempt. Nay, worse than this, He has sought to seduce the people by working false miracles through the power of Beelzebub.

We must look with our eyes and listen with our ears, while these witnesses come forth one by one and are interrogated. The Scribes and Ancients and Priests have schooled them all and taught them what they are to say, and promised them good pay if they do well ; and are now listening in nervous anxiety, and intruding leading questions in the hope of reconciling conflicting statements. Eagerly they watch every witness. But unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who have built it. It is the Tower of Babel over again. The Lord said : *It is one people, and all have one tongue, and they have begun to do this, neither will they leave off from their designs till they accomplish them : therefore their language was confounded (Genesis xi.).*

*Their evidence was not agreeing.* One witness refutes the other. “*Attentive.*” We must not pass away hastily from this scene of confusion and failure. Once more we learn this lesson : *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.—The desire of the wicked shall perish.*

B. *Many bore false witness against Him.*

The dark hours are passing quickly away, and these wise men are saying once more to each other : *Do you see that*

*we prevail nothing?* (St. John xii.). Each one brings forward the excellent witness that he has found, sure that this one at least will settle the case. And at each new failure and contradiction the vexation and rage and confusion of the disappointed judges is increasing. *The wicked shall see and shall be angry, and he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). Each Priest, each Scribe, each Ancient is disgusted at the silly blundering of the others. The great guiding spirit, Annas, has come in, and is not at all more humble on account of his own failure. He is merciless in his scoffing at the inconceivable stupidity of his colleagues. If Caiphas at a former meeting said so arrogantly to his fellows: *You know nothing*; what manner of words come now from the bitter chagrin and feverish disgust of this proud leader of the proud! The morning is coming quickly. It is an essential part of their programme to have Jesus of Nazareth condemned by the Roman Governor and crucified before the city is well awake: *Last perchance there should be a tumult among the people*. And behold! they have not got one case ready to be presented to Pilate. "Why has the precious time been utterly thrown away on the silliest trifling? What will the Roman care whether the Nazarene breaks the Sabbath or not? What is the Sabbath to him? Why do you not bring witnesses that can prove some danger to Roman authority?"

"Of what possible utility is it to lose the precious hours in discussing whether He forbad tribute to Cæsar, when you every one know that three days ago He said before you all and before the people: *Give to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar*? The case has been utterly mismanaged. If Jesus of Nazareth escapes and brings ruin on us all, you must thank yourselves for it."

The inspired writer tells us that some months later, when these same Priests and Scribes were listening to St. Stephen, *they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth*.

We want stronger words to express their frenzy now. It was He Who is now and always meek and gentle and loving, infinitely beyond the sons of men, who said to them erewhiles: *You are of your father, the devil; and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning* (St. John viii.).

"From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, Lord Jesus."

Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos culpis solutos Mites fac et castos.	Virgin mid all virgins bright, And of the meek most meek, Free us from the chains of sin; And make us meek and chaste.
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#### STATION IV.

*And last of all there came two false witnesses: and they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it* (St. Matt. xxvi. 60, 61.).

These witnesses are alluding to what passed in the beginning of our Lord's Public Life, when for the first time He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. On that occasion the Jews said to Him (some of the present judges were doubtless among them): *What sign dost Thou show to us seeing Thou dost these things?* Jesus answered and said to them: *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said: Six and forty years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days?* But He spoke of the temple of His Body. When therefore He was risen again from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this: and they believed the Scripture, and the word that Jesus had said (St. John ii.).

A. *Last of all there came two false witnesses.*

They have just arrived. Some untiring Scribe or Priest has at last traced them and found them; and there are two of them as the law requires. *By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he die that is to be slain*. We have two, thank God! and their evidence is most conclusive. They exult as one who has found much spoils (Psalm cxviii.). But the hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm; and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind (Wisdom v.).

For a moment hope revives in the Council; and the assembled wise men listen attentively to the new evidence. But after hearing a few words, Annas and the clear-sighted among the unhappy men, are more bitter and contemptuous than ever. "Why," they scream out, "*their witness does not agree!*" Is this your boasted evidence, so all-sufficient?

"*Their witness does not agree.* And even if these men you bring to us did agree, how could a silly tale like this go before the Roman Governor? Do you wish him to set us all down as a gang of imbeciles? If a knavish impostor says He can build the Temple in three days, will the Roman crucify Him for such a speech? Besides, we know well that He did not say that He could destroy the Temple in three days. His words were: *Destroy this Temple, and after three days I will rebuild it.* And it was perfectly well known that this was a challenge to us. He dared us to put Him to death; for if we did, He would rise again in three days. Instead of wasting time in senseless blundering, get to business. Take His challenge, and see whether He will rise again."

All these bitter thoughts and many more are no doubt muttered under their breath, in order that Jesus may not hear, nor understand their plans.

The prayer is being heard: *Let them be turned back and confounded that devise evil against Me* (Psalm xxxiv.). What a fearful awakening from their dream when after death comes the Judgment; and this same Jesus of Nazareth is the Judge, and they the guilty prisoners!

Juste Juxta ultionis,

Most just Thy wrath against us, Lord Jesus,

Donum fac remissionis,

But from Thy Heart be merciful and forgive,

Ante diem rationis.

Before the great accounting day shall come.

There is silence in the judgment-hall; the silence of helpless bewilderment. These Scribes and Rulers, cut to

the heart, hang their heads. If they hear a stir, they turn their eyes in a nervous hope that somebody has something to propose.

STATION V.

*And the High Priest, rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest Thou nothing to the things that are laid to Thy charge by these men?* (St. Mark xiv. 60).

*A. Answerest Thou nothing?*

If that be true which is told us, that Annas was an able and a shrewd man, and his son-in-law, Caiphas, only his weak tool, Annas cannot have been proud of this new impotent device of his son-in-law. For what does it amount to? "The witnesses have proved nothing. We have not one single accusation to go before Pilate. But possibly the prisoner can be got to say some word that will criminate Himself, and help us out of our difficulty." Are not these men of that class described by St. Paul, who *when they knew God they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened? For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools* (Romans i.).

Caiphas is the High Priest of the year, looked up to as a wise guide; and yet his words amount to this. "We can get no evidence from our witnesses wherewith to crucify you. Will not you, Jesus of Nazareth, come to our assistance, and say something that may help us to accuse you?"

*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

*From them that resist Thy right hand, keep me* (O God), *as the apple of Thine eye* (Psalm xvi.).

STATION VI.

*But Jesus held His peace, and answered never a word* (St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).

*A. Jesus held His peace.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lady, who sees and hears

all that is passing, and also knows the mind and secret thoughts of her Son Jesus. With what deep veneration she is admiring and reverencing and blessing the heavenly silence of her Son, which is conquering all His enemies.

B. Contemplate also the blessed angels looking with unspeakable contentment on Jesus *dumb as a lamb before his shearer* : refuting all His enemies by His silence.

We imagine, when we are accused, whether rightly or wrongly, that if we make no answer all is lost. The father of lies often persuades us that if we do not tell lies and deny the accusation and swear falsely, ruin must come.

C. *But Jesus was silent.*

"*Attendite.*" Oh, what a useful, what a necessary word is this one dictated by the Holy Spirit : "*Jesus autem tacebat !*" *Jesus was silent ! Jesus held His peace !* The Romans boasted of their Dictator who conquered by delaying action ; and modern soldiers have enlogised masterly inactivity. More useful to us will be the study of the meek and victorious silence of our Saviour. If I am silent when accused, I am saying to my God in secret : *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy : deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.* For Thou, O God, art my strength. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth (Psalm xlii.). Which is better for me, that I plead my own cause, or that God defend me ? If I am silent when accused, God not only speaks for me, but also speaks to me in prayer. *I said, I will take heed to my ways ; that I sin not with my tongue. I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silent from good things ; and my sorrow was renewed.*

Now observe the reward of this meek and humble silence : *My heart grew hot within me : and in my meditation a fire shall flame out* (Psalm xxxviii.). If God is silent towards us in prayer, it may be that we are not silent enough when blamed. "*Jesus autem tacebat.*"

D. *Answerest Thou nothing ?*

See how all these most unwise Councillors fix their eyes on Jesus during this appeal from the High Priest. *They looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm xxi.). In spite of His chains and bonds they feel in the core of their hearts, and in the marrow of their bones, that they are in presence of their Master. *Do you see that we prevail nothing ?*

E. *Answerest Thou nothing ?*

All the while the silence of His tongue is speaking powerfully ; His chains are speaking ; His pale face is speaking ; His weary Body is speaking—*weary, yes, most weary*, for He has been dragged hither faint and exhausted ; and He is now standing all this long while that the judges are seated.

What are His chains and His silence saying ? What lesson are they teaching ? This much at least they have effected : they have driven out of this cruel world that maxim : "*Væ victis*"—*Wo to the conquered.* Jesus was an Infant, to make infants honourable. He was poor, to make the poor man revered. He is now a Man of Sorrows, to make sorrow an enviable privilege. And He is now a prisoner, to raise and sanctify the condition of the chained captive. As He stands silent in His bonds, He sees many future disciples hurrying away in gladness to the Moorish dungeons, to put on the chains of the captive, and set the cherished prisoner of Christ free.

Alas ! what can make our blood run cold, if not the fate of prisoners as they were under fallen and unredeemed men ? The Roman Tribune, we read, was favourable to St. Paul, and wished to rescue him from the fury of the jealous Jews who were beating him. Yet how did he show his pity ? *He commanded him to be bound with two chains, and that he should be scourged and tortured, to know for what cause they did so cry out against him.* If scourges and tortures are for the innocent and uncondemned, what is in store for the sentenced criminal ? "*Væ victis !*" Our Saviour Jesus has compassion on all bondsmen, most of all on poor sinners who are slaves to Lucifer. Sinners they may

be ; but His Heart cannot endure to see the child of His Eternal Father given over for ever to the cruel malice of those spirits that are without pity, without hope, without love. Therefore He Himself said to those princes of darkness and wickedness : *It is your hour ;* and He allowed Himself to be chained, *and compassed with infirmity*, and to be tried and tempted by Lucifer as his other captives are —always, however, *without sin* (Hebrews iv.).

"O Ever-Blessed Mother, watching and listening, listening to the silence of thy chained Son which pleads for us :

Solve vincla reis,  
Profer lumen carcis,  
Mala nostra pelle,  
Bona cuncta posce.

Burst the chains that bind us,  
Let not darkness blind us ;  
Sin drive far away ;  
For all blessings pray."

#### F. *Jesus was silent.*

*Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. xv.). Thanks be to the chains, the silence, the meekness of Jesus. Christian judges do not now go out with the armed mob to arrest the prisoner by night. They do not spend their day and night in finding false witnesses. They do not hurry the prisoner to death in one clandestine midnight sitting. Neither do they chain and bruise and wound and torture the unconvicted.

Yet men sometimes say that Christianity is a failure.

May God in His infinite mercy save us from going back to the days when men were *merciless murderers of their own children* (Wisdom xii.) ; when the rights of a King were : *He will take your sons and put them into his chariots and make them his running footmen to run before his chariots, and your daughters he will take to be his cooks and bakers ; and he will take your fields and your vineyards and your best olive-yards* (1 Kings viii.), and when his miserable slaves had to bow down and worship the monarch before they murdered one another to give him a holiday.

"*Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, bound in chains and silent and meek.*"

#### G. *Answerest Thou nothing ?*

No, nothing ; because the Priests and Scribes and Ancients have not as yet brought forth their real grievances and their genuine accusations against Jesus.

They know quite well themselves that He never has sinned against the Romans ; never forbidden tribute ; never stirred up the people.

But they know well that they have complaints against Him which to them are bitter realities.

The Holy Spirit has revealed to us their real indictment against Him, and admitted us behind the scenes, to listen to their true complaints and accusations which are not recorded in the Gospel. Great light is thrown on the arraignment of Christ Jesus to-night and to-morrow by the detailed account in the Book of Wisdom : *They have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right : Let us lie in wait for the just.*

1. *Because He is not for our turn : He is contrary to our doings ; and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law : and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life.*

*He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold ; for His life is not like other men's, and His ways are very different. We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and He preferreth the latter end of the just* (Wisdom ii.).

This is the first count in the real indictment, and, thanks to their own wickedness, every word of it is true. They do not reason with themselves right, when they imagine that Jesus hatech them personally, but they are quite right in saying : *He is not for our turn. He is contrary to our doings. He divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. His life is not like other men's. Every word of this impeachment is most true. They have still ringing in their ears His public denouncement three days ago, of their hypocrisy and other hideous vices.*

2. Then they have a second grievance :

*He boasteth that He hath the knowledge of God.*

He has been preaching a new Gospel, and calling us children of the devil, because we do not adhere to it. He has told us arrogantly that we shall die in our sins if we do not believe in Him and take Him for our Master.

3. But His third crime is more intolerable than all:

*He calleth Himself the Son of God. He glorieth that He hath God for His Father.* Again and again, with our own ears, we have heard Him preach, *I and the Father are one.*

"Is this to go on? are the people to be all seduced? Are the Romans to step in, and set us all aside that Jesus of Nazareth may reign?"

At this stage then of the proceedings there is, we may be sure, much wavering, much vacillation in the minds of some of these Priests and Scribes and Ancients, and, in consequence, some more deliberations in private.

For, first we must bear in mind that our Blessed Saviour, though not speaking to them, is pleading incessantly for them in His Heart, that they may break away from slavery to Satan: *Why will you die, O house of Israel? Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin* (Ezech. xviii.).

Then secondly, *wickedness*, the Holy Spirit tells us, is *fearful, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things.* There are doubtless some present who, seeing the breakdown of all the evidence, begin to be out of conceit with their work, and very mistrustful of success. But against the suggestions of these timorous men that they have no case that Pilate will listen to, and the rest, Annas and the other more resolute sinners rise up in arms. The Holy Spirit has revealed to us the tactics and policy of these strong men, the giants in iniquity: *Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth* (Wisdom ii.).

"Away with feebleness," they insist. "Let us not be afraid or weak! Why trouble about witnesses? Let us go in a body as early as possible, as soon as ever the day breaks, to the Roman. If we show him that we are all

resolved, he will never dare to withstand us. We must have no traitors among us. Our case is a most clear one: and cannot be gainsaid. For,

1. "The impostor sets us at open defiance, and slanders us publicly before the people.

2. "*He boasteth that He hath the knowledge of God.* Moses and all the prophets are entirely cast aside; we must all believe in Him, and bow down to Him forthwith, and accept His Gospel.

3. "*He calleth Himself the Son of God, and God equal to Jehovah.* Is this no crime? Are the scrupulous ones here present, who wish to guide and rule our counsels, are they prepared to put up with this blasphemy?" Possibly, some one or other of the Councillors expresses a doubt whether all this be true and quite certain; or perhaps Annas thinks in his mind that some may doubt its correctness; in either case this point can at once be settled. No time must be lost, they are coming fast to the end of the third watch of the night.

"Ever-Blessed Mother of God, watching with thy Son Jesus, and one in heart with Him, pray for us sinners that we may love Him and serve Him by day, and love Him and serve Him by night."

*H. But Jesus was silent.*

"Merciful Lord Jesus, many times and far too often have I been silent when Thou hast spoken to me. Silent and deaf: *like the deaf asp.* But Thou, O Lord, wilt not cast off for ever. According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity, and be not Thou silent to me, O my God, lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down into the pit" (Psalm xxviii.).

All these waverers, then, must be convinced by positive proof that He is guilty of the most heinous blasphemy.

## STATION VII.

*And the High Priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ the Son of God (St. Matt. xxvi.). Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God? (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. As we have seen, Annas and others wish this question to be put solemnly that the timorous and hesitating may be made firm and resolved. Did Satan also and the spirits of darkness inspire this question? If so, they are unconsciously and unwillingly doing the work of God. This is an instance in which we see most clearly how all the efforts of His enemies *work together unto good* for Christ Jesus.

This is by far the most important charge against Him: *He calleth Himself the Son of God.*

*For a good work, they said to Him heretofore, we stone Thee not: but for blasphemy: and because that Thou being a Man, makest Thyself God (St. John x.).* Nothing so important for the cause of our Lord as that it should be made quite clear that this is His capital crime.

*Out of the mouths of suckings, Lord Jesus, Thou canst draw perfect praise; and so too out of the mouths of Thy malicious enemies, canst Thou draw Thy glorious truth and Thy justification.*

B. *I adjure Thee that Thou tell us.*

*There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak.* While witnesses were deposing against Him, Jesus has been silent, *dumb as the lamb before his shearer.* *He opened not His mouth.* Now it is a time to speak.

1. Because the High Priest, appealing to Him officially, questions on a point that rightly comes under his cognisance. *Jesus, it is written, began to do and to teach.* It is always so. He does what He teaches. Even when crying out: *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees!* He inculcated reverence and obedience to God's delegates in their official capacity, however unworthy their private life may be.

2. Caiphas, fearing that Jesus will still maintain silence, uses words of great power: *I adjure Thee by the living God* Who likes to refuse the poor man who begs in the name of the living God? or even in the name of the Blessed Mother?

Our Blessed Lord Himself bound Himself by this promise: *Whatever you shall ask the Father in My Name, that will I do. If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do.* When we ask in the name of Jesus, we adjure God solemnly and He listens, listens most willingly. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, St. Peter will say soon to the lame man, Arise, and walk (Acts iii.); and sickness and infirmity will reverence the Holy Name and obey.*

"I exorcise thee, unclean spirit," the minister of Christ Jesus will say at the font of Baptism, "I exorcise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; therefore, demon accursed, acknowledge thy sentence, give honour to the true and living God, and go out from this servant of God." And the wicked spirit will depart.

Our most charitable Saviour in the midst of His great sorrow is charitably teaching all of us this holy lesson, to reverence the name of God; to do quickly and willingly what is asked and what is commanded in the Holy Name of God.

3. Then thirdly, He desires to preach the great truth, the great fundamental truth, that *I am the Son of the Blessed God, made Man for love of you.* *For this, He will say to-morrow, For this came I into the world, that I should give testimony of the truth.* His Cross is to be, as we have seen, *Cathedra docentis*—the chair of our teacher; and all through His Sacred Passion, everywhere, at every step, He is doing, He is suffering, He is teaching. Well He knew that the word He preaches here in the midnight to a few will be preached from the housetop to many till the consummation of the world.



C. *I adjure Thee that Thou tell us.*

Mark how they all now hang on His lips. They who have no patience with their own colleagues who speak, are breathless now. *They looked and stared upon Me.*

D. Let us observe also the unspeakable solace that this question brings to our Blessed Lady, who, as we have seen, is through her Mother's privilege, and as the second Eve, watching and listening and sharing every sorrow. At last she hears a word spoken that betis the mouth of the High Priests, and will enable her Son to preach the word of life.

#### STATION VIII.

*Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*Jesus said to him: I am (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and other holy writers, doubt whether this form, *Thou hast said it*, is equal to a positive affirmation, or only an appeal to their own inward convictions. Thus, they say, when Judas asked: *Is it I, Lord?* Jesus answered *Thou hast said it*; giving an answer that he would understand, but not affirming so clearly that the rest would know that Judas was the traitor. So, too, when Pilate asked: *Art Thou a king?* Jesus answered, *Thou sayest that I am a king.* And Pilate after having this answer, says: *I see no cause in Him.* If the answer of Jesus was a clear affirmation, these writers contend, Pilate would have had cause to condemn Him for assuming royalty.

Other holy and learned commentators, however, consider that this form is a well-known Hebraism, and equivalent to an affirmation. In whatever way this question be decided, it is clear in the present instance from St. Mark's account that our Saviour answered with a decided and unmistakable affirmation: *I am.*

*Jesus said to him, I am.*

As we listen most attentively, we observe how our Blessed Lord does not reply in haste, but after a pause, and with great deliberation, and very solemnly, and with a voice

that fills the soul of His Blessed Mother, and all His holy angels, with a most peaceful contentment.

B. *Jesus said to him, I am.*

"High Priest of Israel, and you that sit in the chair of Moses, you adjure Me in the name of God My Father to tell you; and I now therefore do tell you: *I am the Son of the Blessed God.*"

And with this word goes a grace that is offered to the heart of every one listening. And the word of the Lord, *living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword, reaches unto the division of the soul and the spirit, and the joints also, and the marrow.*

Those who have been wavering are shaken in their purpose, and the vigilant guardian angels whisper to each of them: *Be converted: cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart: and woe will you die, O house of Israel?* (Ezech. xviii.). Knowing how grace is working in the hearts of these dupes of Satan, our Blessed Lord, Who wishes not at all the death of the sinner, adds other words and new graces.

#### STATION IX.

*Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven (St. Matt. xxvi. 64).*

A. That is, though you now ask this question in derision, and scoffing at Me; and though at present I seem to be a *Man without help*: yet I remind you again that this is so only because I will it, and because I choose to say to you: *It is your hour.* You were not My masters when I with one word cast you on the ground in the Garden; and when this short hour of yours is past, I shall again show Myself to be your Master.

B. *You shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

These Priests and Scribes have heard and have read

what the Prophets wrote concerning the day of the Lord that is to come; and they have preached to the people of this great day: *For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can stand it?* (Joel ii.). *That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds, a day of the trumpet and alarm—and I will distress men—because they have sinned against the Lord* (Sophonias i.).

Our Blessed Saviour, then, rendering good for evil, reminds them of truths familiar to them; and His words, uttered so solemnly, are, they feel in the depths of their souls, the words of one Who speaks with power and authority. Grace fights a good fight in the hearts of these blinded dupes of Lucifer; some are much inclined to do justice to Jesus, so *powerful in word and work*. But, alas! *all we*, the Prophet writes, *like sheep have gone astray. Like sheep, the Psalmist also wrote, Like sheep they are laid in Hell.*

*Like sheep*: for sheep unreflecting follow a leader. And men when they have neglected the sweet calls of Jesus, Who wishes to gather them even as the *hen gathers her chickens*, immediately go and enslave themselves to a man, and follow a leader. Such now, too, these Judges are in presence of their Chief, their ruling spirit. They lift up their eyes to see what they read on the face of Annas. His mind is still what it was. *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth*. "Let us have no feelingness here, no traitors. Any one who is disposed to turn faint, and hark back, let that man be marked. *Let our strength be the law*."

The good seed that was sown and had sprung up a little, is withered by the frown of this one man, and forthwith, *like sheep*, they tamely follow the lead. They are the self-same men to whom Jesus, full of pity, said in times past: *How can you believe who receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?* (St. John v.).

## STATION X.

*Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you?* (vv. 65, 66.).

## A. The High Priest rent his garments.

For, Caiphas, along with the rest, looks to Annas, and from his fierce countenance learns what he is to do and say. Alas! poor fallen, outcast priests, *rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God*, Who stands before you; *for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth, but He will return and forgive?* (Joel ii.).

## B. Observe how every step in this conspiracy is illegal.

The midnight trial is illegal. The haste is illegal. Those wise in Jewish law tell us that ample provision was made in that law for the protection of the prisoner. Here judges and counsellors are turned into accusers and persecutors and pursuivants and executioners. And now the High Priest rends his garments.

This too is, so some commentators think, a breach of the law.

*The High Priest*, that is to say, THE PRIEST, the greatest among his brethren, upon whose head the oil of unction hath been poured, and whose hands have been consecrated for the priesthood, and who hath been invested with the holy vestments, shall not uncover his head (or) rend his garments (Levit. xxi.).<sup>1</sup>

## C. The High Priest rent his garments.

Only three days ago Jesus meek and humble of Heart said to Caiphas and his colleagues Hypocrites, blind guides, *who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!* This High Priest, this blind guide of the rest, is scandalised by the words of Jesus, and not shocked and terrified and confounded at the sight of his own iniquities.

<sup>1</sup> Some interpreters, however, think that this prohibition only refers to the case of mourning for the dead, and does not apply when blasphemy is uttered.

"O compassionate Lord Jesus, hear the prayer of Thy Blessed Mother for us poor sinners, and say to our hearts with power and authority: *Beware of the heaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*" (St. Luke xii.).

**D. *He hath blasphemed.***

This word meant more in that hour than it does in our conversations now. For the law was stern. *He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die* (Levit. xxiv.). These men who are setting all law at defiance, mean this law to be fulfilled to the letter, and are plotting far more, against their neighbour, Jesus of Nazareth.

With them, *He hath blasphemed*, means "He shall die."

On a certain day in time past, Jesus had reminded them that they who are not innocent are not wise if they throw stones at the guilty. But they are now following the teaching of another master, whose constant effort it is to keep us all judging others and doing the things we judge, because he knows that God will never depart from that most just and necessary rule: *With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned* (St. Luke vi.). *Judgment without mercy to him who hath not done mercy* (St. James ii.).

"O Ever-Blessed Mother of mercy, pray for us sinners, that if we sin we may have, at least, grace not to judge and condemn others for doing what we do ourselves."

**STATION XI.**

*What think you? But they answering, said, He is guilty of death* (v. 66).

**A. *What think you?***

Hear this murderous question put to each of these unhappy men; murderous, a thousand times more, to their souls than to the Body of Jesus. Observe the fierce eye of

Annas, how he watches that no one shall escape without answering. For he is one who will not enter himself the Kingdom of God, and is bent on not suffering others to enter. *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.*

Listen, as the question is put officially to each one. *What think you?* Let us mark with sorrow how, at the voice of a man lower and more degraded than themselves, these children of God, these Priests and Scribes and Ancient men fling away all strength, all courage, all sense of right; trample on the good seed but now cast into their souls; and, while recording angels write down in sadness, utter, with suicidal tongues, their own doom: *He is guilty of death.* Yes, each of them, one by one, pronounces the official sentence: *He is guilty of death*; and this official sentence is their own sentence. *He hath blasphemed: He is guilty of death.*

**B. *He is guilty of death.***

This sentence is welcome to the unseen spirits of wickedness. For as yet they know not that they are in conflict with God made Man. St. Paul calls the mystery of man's redemption worked out by the Incarnation, *the wisdom of God in a mystery. A wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory* (1 Cor. ii.). By the *princes of this world* commentators understand him to mean not only the Jewish Rulers, and Pilate and Herod; but the unseen rulers of the world of this darkness. When Satan said to Him on the pinnacle of the Temple: *If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down*, he was conjecturing and trying to make out what degree of sanctity was in the Soul of Jesus. He used the word "Son of God" in the sense afterwards adopted by his disciple, the arch-heretic Arius; but he does not yet understand that Jesus is God made Man, otherwise he never would have tried to compass His Death. Some holy writers are of opinion that as the

Sacred Passion goes on, the spirits of darkness begin to suspect that He is more than man, and therefore begin to wish much to prevent His Death by inducing Him to descend from the Cross. At present they think Him to be only a man; and that by killing Him they will stop the work He is doing. They are aware of what our Lord said three days ago that unless the days of persecution were shortened, *no flesh should be saved*. Therefore, by persecuting Jesus and killing Him, they hope much to check the work of salvation.

C. *He is guilty of death.*

After this, *Sussum corda!* we must lift our thoughts much higher and hear in the councils of the Eternal Father the sentence of death ratified against Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, the Son of the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, Who has taken on Himself the sins of the world, and therefore has chosen to be *guilty of death*. Glory be to the Father, *Who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting* (St. John iii.).

D. *He is guilty of death.*

And then in His own most Holy Soul, our Blessed Saviour Himself, as He hears voice after voice repeat the sentence: *He is guilty of death*: with infinite love, ratifies it. He says a word akin to that which He on the morrow will put into the heart of His crucified companion on Calvary: *We are receiving the just reward of our deeds*. I have chosen to become *sin* for My brethren, for My fallen family. The Father has laid upon Me the iniquities of them all. *Upon Me let all this iniquity be*. Let Me die, and lay down My life that I may see the promised *long-lived seed*, that I may *gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed*. Let Me be lifted up from the earth that I may *draw all things to Myself*.

E. And there is also a true sense in which we too may join in the verdict, and say that the Lamb of God deserves to die, and the Ever-Blessed Mother deserves to see Him

die. For who but the sinless are really worthy to die and to suffer for sinners? Out of His infinite charity He shares His privilege and His glory with His martyrs. He allows them to drink the chalice with Him; to suffer and to be slain. They die indeed for His sake, for the sake of their own good God; but Jesus dies for the sake of the ungrateful sinner. Who but the Holy of Holies is worthy to die such a death of love? Who but His Immaculate Mother is worthy to be standing by, pierced with the *sword of sorrow* while she looks on such a death of love?

*"Hail, full of grace, blessed art thou amongst women: and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Blessed is He Who is worthy to lay down His life for us sinners. Blessed art thou who art worthy to be the Mother of the Crucified."*

STATION XII.

*Then did they spit in His face* (v. 67).

A. Some writers who have made a study of Jewish law, and of the Talmud, and of the ancient customs of the Jews, tell us that it was the usual practice for the judges to rise from their seats and spit in the face of the condemned criminal; and they are of opinion that this savage usage was rigorously enforced now. The Priests, then, and the Ancients and Scribes, before they retire set an example to the servants whom they are leaving in charge, and give vent to their hatred and scorn and envy and malice, by covering His sacred face with their phlegm. They answering, said, *He is guilty of death. Then did they spit upon Him.*

Some commentators think that we may accept this narrative as it stands, and assume that His judges sentenced Him, and immediately began to spit upon Him.

*I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me* (Isaiah l.). O God, our Protector, look on the Face of Thy Christ.

"O Blessed Mother, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the sacred Face of thy Son Jesus."

B. Then for a brief space before separating, they confer together: "You must be weary," they say one to another: "we have had a long day of work and a hard day". So are they saying still in the everlasting prison-house if before death their hearts were not contrite. Yes. *We walked through hard ways during those miserable days; and we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity.*

Now meanwhile they must have some repose—but short.

The word of Annas is again repeated: *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Let our strength be the law of justice.*

"There must be no wavering: no time lost. Messengers must at once during the night summon all the absent members of the Great Council, those only excepted who cannot be relied upon. All must be in their place with the daybreak. Witnesses we do not want. There is not one amongst them fit to appear before the Roman. But if he sees that we are agreed, and resolved, and bent upon it, he will not dare to oppose us, he will *let our strength be the law of justice.* Jesus of Nazareth will be crucified before the people are awake, AND THEN WE CAN HAVE OUR FESTIVAL DAY IN PEACE." Even so, Zares, wife of Aman the great chancellor, and the rest of his friends, counselled him: *Order a great beam to be prepared: and in the morning speak to the king that Mardochai may be hanged upon it, AND SO THOU SHALT GO FULL OF JOY WITH THE KING TO THE BANQUET. The counsel pleased him, and he ordered a big gibbet to be prepared* (Escher v.). Severe and stern orders are given to the servants and the guards to watch their Prisoner carefully. It will be an evil night for them if He escapes, and so the Priests and Ancients retire; bidding each other good night! "So far we have succeeded! Farewell." Some writers, however, are of opinion that some of them remain for a time to take part in the orgies of the servants.

C. "*Attendite.*" We may stay yet a little while to store up a lesson for ourselves. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour* is a commandment, made much more sacred in our Lord's new law of charity. As we contemplate in this judgment-hall, the precept ought to grow most dear to us.

"*Reogitabo tibi, Domine, annos meos.*" "I will recount to Thee, Lord Jesus, my years gone by, to deplore the miserable hours when I bore false witness, or encouraged others to bear false witness against the absent." For now I know that if I do it against one of His least brethren, my Saviour will class me with those who brought false witness against Himself. That *lex talionis*, the law of reprisals: *a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye*—is not abolished in Christ's Gospel, but perfected; enforced in a much more rigorous way. If I do harm to the absent by false witness, or detraction, that harm will all come down on me, *heaped up, pressed down, and flowing over.* If I encourage a tale-bearer to malign the absent, I become at once partner in his sin, and in the curse that rests upon his sin.

And here let us not forget, that though he who calumniates me behind my back sins and is guilty; yet it is not he who does me the greatest injury, but the tale-bearer who comes to tell me what my neighbour has said against me. It is he who scandalises me, that is, gives occasion to my sin and stirs up revenge within me by telling me of the wrong done me. *The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed.* THE TONGUE OF A THIRD PERSON has disquieted many. *It hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich. He that hearkeneth to it shall never have rest, neither shall he have a friend in whom he may repose. The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark; but the stroke of a tongue will break the bones* (Ecclus. xxviii.). We must not forget this word. IT IS THE TONGUE OF A THIRD PERSON, who comes to bring tales to me, that does the evil.

D. As the judges retire, the Heart of our Lord and

the heart of His Holy Mother, ever joined to His, are praying for them. For it was out of the abundance of His Heart that His mouth spoke that lesson: *Pray for those who calumniate you.*

*They opened their mouth wide against Me; they said, Well done, well done! our eyes have seen it. Let them not say in their hearts: It is well, it is well, to our mind. Neither let them say, We have swallowed Him up. Let them blush and be ashamed together who rejoice at My evils (Psalm xxxiv.).*

With infinite compassion our Saviour prays, for their sakes, that they may not exult in their sin.

## SCENE IX.

THE COURT BELOW. ST. PETER.

Already we have seen something of the plan of the Priests' Palace and the arrangement of the buildings. A few words more may be useful. Those who are learned in Jewish architecture explain for us the Gospel text by the knowledge which they have derived from other sources.

1. Coming from Gethsemani, those leading Jesus arrive first at the gateway where the portress is.

2. They enter into a covered hall; the outward hall or vestibule, in which is the porter's lodge. In our English version, this outward hall is spoken of as *before the court* (St. Mark xiv.). A more literal translation from the Greek would be: *He went forth into the outward hall (eis to prokōlon)*. Our English version is a literal translation from the Latin—(*exiit foras ante atrium*).

3. Passing on from the covered hall, they find themselves in the open courtyard (*in atrio, ēv τῇ αὐλῇ*) (St. Mark xiv.). This court, we are told, was ordinarily surrounded by a covered colonnade.

4. From this court a flight of steps leads to the judgment-hall of the High Priest.

This we gather from St. Mark xiv. 64: *When Peter stood in the court below.*

5. A question arises, Where was the fire lighted? Our English version of St. Luke's Gospel has the words, *in the hall*. In St. Mark's Gospel, we read that he was warming himself in the court below. In St. Matthew, *Peter sat without in the court*. Was the fire, then, in the covered hall or in the open court? The Latin and Greek text settle this question, for we find that where our version has 'the word hall, and also where our version

has the word *court*, the Latin in both places has *atrium* and the Greek *αὐλῇ*. Therefore our English version, St. Luke xxii. 55: *Where they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall*, would, it seems, be more correct if it were, *in the centre of the courtyard*.

Here we must go back to the early part of this third watch of the night, which is now coming to a close, namely to the time when the armed multitude have left Gethsemani and are dragging our Saviour up the steep hill.

## STATION I.

*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple (St. John xviii.).*

*But Peter followed afar off (St. Luke xxii.).*

A. Let us fix our thoughts on Simon Peter. His heart has become very sad, when he finds that he has fled from his Master in His hour of danger and sorrow. More than all the rest, he professed fidelity unto death.

He stops in his flight. He cannot bear to go further. He must return and see what happens to his Master, for Whom he has a true love. From the revelations made to holy persons, we gather that the thought too of abandoning the Blessed Virgin in this time of great danger, added greatly to the distress of the Apostle. Perhaps, also, his impetuous spirit is reviving somewhat, and he is upbraiding himself for not having used his sword more perseveringly.

B. *Peter followed afar off.*

His courage, however, is much abated by the sudden scare that moved them all to take to flight.

He does not venture to do more than follow *afar off*. For him who aimed a death-blow at the High Priest's servant there will be no mercy if he is recognised and made prisoner.

Time was when he could not bear to be far from his Master. *Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the waters*, he said in his impatience to be with Jesus. All that eager love will return again. But in this hour he is not inclined to draw too near: *he followed afar off*.

C. *Peter followed afar off.*

The words suggest a thought to spiritual writers, that it is better in every way to follow Christ closely, than to keep afar off. Our cowardly nature tells us that it is easier to meditate for a few minutes than for an hour. But experience proves (1) that as flies keep away from a cauldron that is hot, but draw near when it cools; so the devil keeps away from the fervent who resist him, and molests perpetually those who are lukewarm. Then (2) that our Blessed Saviour delights in being generous to those who are generous to Him, whilst with the niggardly He will be niggardly: *With the holy Thou wilt be holy; with the perverse Thou wilt be perverted* (Psalm xvii.).

But if God holds His hand, and helps but sparingly, spiritual life becomes dreary indeed; and a temptation easily prevails. Our Saviour said last week at Jericho, *that from him who has little grace that little will be quickly taken away.*

*And so did another disciple.*

St. John alone mentions this other disciple. Students naturally ask, "Who is he?" A very common opinion is, that St. John does not wish to give his own name, but that he was the companion of St. Peter; and that he was known to the High Priest, either because, as some say, he had sold to Caiphas a plot of land that was near Tiberias; or, as others think, because, as a fisherman, he had supplied the Priest's house with fish.

Other commentators think it very unlikely that a poor fisherman of Galilee was known to the High Priest. They prefer to think that *the disciple known to the High Priest* must have been Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some one else of a higher station.

Two reasons occur that cast a doubt on his being St. John: (1) when he speaks of himself in the narration of the Supper, he calls himself *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. Would he not have used the same title here? (2) If it was St. John, would he not have remained with Peter in the court below? There is no trace of his presence there.

Still we find it taken for granted in the revelations recorded by holy persons that it was St. John.

STATION II.

*And Peter followed Him afar off even into the court of the High Priest (St. Mark xiv.).*

*Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the High Priest. But Peter, stood at the door without. The other disciple, therefore, who was known to the High Priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter (St. John xviii.).*

St. John, as usual, supplies details omitted by the other Evangelists. Were it not for his help, it might be difficult to understand how Peter gained admission into the palace.

A. St. Peter is by nature bold and impetuous, and rushes into danger. Who but he would wish to leap into the waves to meet our Lord? Who would draw the sword single-handed to resist an armed multitude? He is now once more running into a grave danger of a worse kind. In the former case the life of his body was imperilled. Now his soul is in great danger. Moreover, in the midnight storm on the lake, he asked permission of our Saviour, nay more, asked for a command, before he threw himself into the danger. In this midnight storm, far more awful, he acts without his Master's counsel and sanction.

Most wisely Holy Church teaches us to pray often that "all our words and works may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended."

B. *The other disciple went and brought in Peter.*

Thanks to the charity and humility of the Heart of our Lord, He has not single-handed completed the redemption of each one of us; but left us all a little work to do for ourselves and for one another. *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body which is the Church* (Coloss. i.). Each one thus may become a Jesus, a Saviour to his neighbours. Through the communion of saints one faithful servant already safe in his

eternal home goes out, we may say, to bring in another, still fighting his battle on the earth. Who can conceive the everlasting gratitude of the blessed to those who have by prayer, by penance, by labour, helped them into Heaven? And yet their gratitude is as nothing at all compared with the infinite and everlasting thanksgiving of Christ Jesus, 'Who says throughout eternity: What you did to My little ones, you did to Me.

## STATION III.

*The maid, therefore, that was portress saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples? He saith, I am not (St. John xviii. 17).*

*Art thou one of this Man's disciples?*

I. Are we obliged to believe that the portress put this question at the moment when Peter was entering? Reading hurriedly, we should probably think that this was the case, but St. John does not say so; and later on we shall see reason to think that it was not then, but afterwards, that she indulged her unhappy curiosity.

For the question is discussed: how many times did St. Peter deny our Lord? The commonly received opinion is that he denied three; and it is thought by judicious commentators that our Blessed Saviour sanctioned this opinion by afterwards requiring three professions of his love from St. Peter.

Other writers, however, have taught that he denied seven times, and certainly more than three denials seem to be mentioned in the Gospels.

One thing, however, which strongly favours the common opinion is that all the Evangelists record three distinct denials, and none of them more than three. It happens more than once that we find in one Evangelist a denial not related by the others; but as they all mention three, and no more, it seems highly probable the tradition was that the Saint denied three times.

The two conflicting opinions have been reconciled in this way. St. Peter repeated his denials on *three separate and distinct occasions*, but on each occasion he was questioned more than once and denied more than once.

II. The commentators further notice progressive degrees in his denials.

a. On the first occasion it was a simple denial: *He said, I am not (St. John xviii.).*

b. On the second: *He denied with an oath that I know not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*  
c. On the third: *He began to curse and swear that he knew not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

We may then endeavour to arrange the several denials mentioned in the Gospels into three groups, or, in other words, try to determine the three occasions on which they took place.

## STATION IV.

*The maid, therefore, that was portress saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples? He saith: I am not. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself (St. John xviii.).*

*And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall (the court) and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom when a certain servant-maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with Him. But he denied, saying: Woman, I know Him not (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And he sat with the servants at the fire and warmed himself. Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the High Priest. And when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And going in he sat with the servants that he might see the end. And there came to him a servant-maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

Here we have from the four Gospels the denial that is put in the first place by each Evangelist. There seems to be no reason why we may not assume that the servant-maid who questions in all these four cases, is one and the same person, namely, the portress, who when she has finished her work at the door, and let all in who are to come in, naturally goes to the fire to warm herself with the rest—for it was cold, as St. John writes. Even from St. John's narrative this harmony of the four narratives looks



very probable. For though, on the one hand, he seems to join on the question put by the portress to the entrance of St. Peter—*The other disciple spoke to the portress and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that was portress saith to Peter, Art thou not also one of this Man's disciples?*—yet if we observe what follows we see that he indicates that Peter was at the fire when the portress questioned him. *He saith, I am not. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself.*

Here then we have for contemplation the story of St. Peter's first fall, and the composition of place. St. John, indeed, writes that he was *stranded at a fire of coals*. St. Matthew and St. Mark write that he *sat with the servants*. This slight discrepancy is accounted for if we suppose that there are not seats enough for all the large party of servants assembled, and that some are sitting, some standing. St. Peter sometimes finds a vacant seat, and sometimes is obliged to stand.

A. *Whom when a certain servant-maid (the portress) had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with Him.—Art thou not also one of His disciples? Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. He saith: I am not.—Woman, I know Him not. He denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest.*

Wise commentators hold that the Evangelists do not always intend to give the exact words spoken, but rather the sense. We need not, therefore, believe that this portress said all these words here given; but if she did, there would be nothing in the repetition, and in the mixture of questions and affirmatives, contrary to the nature of inquisitive curiosity.

All the Evangelists are agreed that a woman takes the lead in this outburst of unhallowed curiosity. It is from a woman, in the first place, *that the scandal cometh to the future Vicar of Christ. "Dux femina facit."* On the other hand, holy writers remark that there is no instance mentioned in the Gospels of a woman taking any part in the outrages heaped on our Lord during His Passion. On the contrary, women showed compassion and stood by the Cross. There remains, however, the sad coincidence that in the beginning the Fall was in great measure helped on by a woman: and in the new creation of Jesus Christ

scandal comes to His Vicar through a woman. But to this must always be added, that the Blessed among women has abundantly and superabundantly repaired the damage done by woman.

B. *Art thou not one of this Man's disciples?*

We must notice how the mischief originates in idle curiosity. To this woman it matters nothing at all who or what this stranger is. How little heed we give to our Saviour's word: *I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account of it at the Day of Judgment.*

An idle word seems to us so harmless; but we see in this courtyard, how terrible the outcome may be. If the palace had crumbled, if Jerusalem had been destroyed by earthquake, this would have been a small catastrophe compared with the fall of this holy Apostle, the future Vicar of Christ. The woman seems to speak but a passing word; but when we read of St. Peter's after years, and his enduring contrition through all the time of his exile on earth, we can see the truth of St. James' comparison, that one idle question from the restless tongue can cause a distress like the vast conflagration that grows out of a spark of fire.

Terrified by idle and unnecessary questioning, children often sully the bright innocence of childhood, and become liars. An idle question destroys fidelity, and induces the faithless tongue to betray grave secrets; an idle curiosity encourages the tale-bearer to divulge some news which engenders a life-long quarrel and bitter hatred.

If there were no curious questioners there would be few calumniators, detractors, and backbiters. There is great truth in our homely proverb: "Ask me no questions, and I will tell you no lies". Ask me no questions, and I will not sin myself by my tongue, and you will not sin by listening, and will not sin by repeating and propagating the slander or detraction which you learn from me.

Restless curiosity turns the tongue, the ears, the eyes, and all the senses into instruments of inquiry.

St. Bernard wrote a treatise on the degrees of pride; and he sets down as the first degree, curiosity of the senses. Why so? Because, he says, if we were humble and saw our own sins, we should not care much to busy ourselves about our neighbour's concerns.

C. *When a certain serving-maid had earnestly beheld him.*

Alas, how much earnestness do Christian men and women sometimes waste deplorably to find out some secret which they ought not to know! They become unpaid and unblest detectives.

#### STATION V.

*As he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath:*

*That I know not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him, began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And after a little while another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter said: O man, I am not (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him: Art thou not one of His disciples? He denied it, and said: I am not (St. John xviii.).*

Here we have the four denials that are put in the second place by the four Evangelists. We have to arrange them as well as we can in their proper order.

1. *After a little while (St. Luke).*

Therefore some interval—not a very long one—separates the second denial from the first.

2. *As he went out of the gate (St. Matt.).*

Does this mean that St. Peter went out of the enclosure into the street?

Clearly not. St. Mark's words explain St. Matthew's: *He went forth before the court.* As has been already said, a literal translation from the Greek renders the phrase more intelligible: *He went forth into the hall or vestibule (the προαίλιον).*

3. As he went forth into the hall the cock crew. This is the first crowing of the cock, supposed to have taken place at some uncertain time after midnight.

Considering these different passages, and drawing our inferences, we may perhaps arrange the incidents in this order.

1. After the first denial at the fire, St. Peter's soul becomes troubled. Remorse is tormenting him, and he becomes restless. He is, moreover, afraid of being questioned again. He therefore withdraws from the group gathered round the fire, and goes, through the interior gate, from the court into the hall, to see if he can there escape notice. He cannot as yet make up his mind to leave the building. He still retains that desire which he had when he came in: *Going in he sat with the servants that he might see the end.*

2. It is not, however, easy for him to remain unnoticed. To use St. James' comparison, a spark of fire soon spreads if there is combustible matter lying about; and so does a word spread quickly, where gossiping is rife. It has gone about among the servants that one of the disciples of Jesus is among them, and Peter has been pointed out as the one. To his dismay, then, as he is passing through the gate into the hall, he hears once more the dreaded words: *This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. This is one of them; and on this occasion also, the stone of stumbling and the rock of scandal is the idle and restless curiosity of a woman.* This time he is so terror-stricken and confused that he denied with an oath: *I know not the Man.*

Finding then that there is no safety for him in the hall, he thinks it better to try to lose himself in the crowd in the courtyard; and therefore makes his way back to the fire. No sooner is he returned, and standing and warming himself, than some of those here say to him: *Art thou not one of His disciples? He denied it and said, I am not.*

A. *Thou also art one of them.*

With much compassion we can contemplate St. Peter wandering about in this distressing uncertainty: *He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind (St. James i.).* The grace of the Holy Ghost is what steadies us: *Virtute firmans perpei.*

B. *After a little while.*

When we yield to temptation and fall, unless we rise very promptly and very thoroughly, a second and worse fall is more easy than the first. Those who put off confession after a first sin forget that until they are restored to God's grace by a good absolution, the devil has much more power over them. The father of lies, knowing this advantage that he has, always endeavours to persuade one who has fallen, that he must delay before making a confession; that it is not decent or reverent to go at once to confession; that time is required for preparation. But time is not the appointed preparation for absolution. If one rises, and quickly makes strong acts of faith, that God is a merciful Father, that the wounds of Jesus are crying louder than his sins, and if with a firm hope he hastens to confession, this is a much better preparation for absolution than slow delays can be. We must never forget this teaching of our spiritual guides, that Satan cares little for the victory he gains when a sin is committed, unless he can persuade the fallen man to commit a second and worse sin, by casting away hope. If a man sins and rises quickly with a strong hope, Satan flies away full of confusion and chagrin.

C. *Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.*

How easy it is to fall again if we remain in the same danger! Even when we confess rightly and are validly absolved, still it is rash and reckless and a great presumption to go back at once, without necessity, to the place where it is so difficult to walk without meeting the stone of stumbling.

D. *They said therefore to him: Art thou not one of His disciples?*

How great is the power of companionship! *We have all gone astray like sheep.*

If the good keep together in guilds and sodalities, they climb together the mountain of God, and enter Heaven in legions. So is it with the worldly and the wicked; they become sinful by the contagion of example and conversation. Hence the Psalmist says: *They are laid in Hell*

*like sheep*: the whole flock perishing together. St. Peter has been accustomed to companionship with our Lord, with the Blessed Mother of God, with Christ's chosen ones. He is now quite out of place. *What concord hath Christ with Belial?* (2 Cor. vi.).

Surely we are much inclined to underrate the power that companionship has over us. In the old times, God ordered peremptorily the extermination of wicked men and women, lest His people should be tainted by companionship. How strongly, too, does St. Paul speak: *Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. What part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? Wherefore go out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord* (2 Cor. vi.).

Some say: "I am yoked with an unbeliever, but we get on very well together". When a Catholic and an unbeliever get on well together, too often the Catholic has met the unbeliever half-way; and unconsciously agreed to suppress a certain amount of his creed. The saying is true: "Tell me a man's companions, and I will tell you his character". The familiar proverb says the same thing in more homely words: "Birds of a feather flock together".

E. *He went forth before the court, and the cock crew.*

It is worthy of note, that the first crowing of the cock seems to produce no effect on the mind of St. Peter. He does not heed it. So is it with sermons and good books, and even such a miracle as our Lord worked in the Garden; unless grace works inwardly, the voice speaking outwardly has no more power than the sounding brass and tinkling symbol.

F. *He denied with an oath.*

We must observe, too, how sin grows. Job said, *Man born of a woman never continueth in the same state*. This is true of the spiritual life also. The holy man is ever planning new ascensions in his heart (Psalm lxxxiii.), and Satan is never content with conquests gained. He works perseveringly, till he has induced his victim to seal his doom by death-bed despair.

## STATION VI.

*And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter : Surely thou art also one of them, for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter : Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, saying : I know not this Man of Whom you speak (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And after the space as it were of one hour, another certain man affirmed, saying : Of a truth this man was also with Him, for he is also a Galilean. And Peter said : Man, I know not what thou sayest (St. Luke xxii.).*

*One of the servants of the High Priest (a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off) saith to him : Did I not see thee with Him in the Garden ? Again therefore Peter denied (St. John xviii.).*

1. These are the four denials, which the four Evangelists set in the third place. There seems to be no difficulty in taking for granted that they all belong to one and the same occasion.

2. *After the space as it were of one hour* (St. Luke). There is, therefore, an interval of about an hour, between the second and third denial. The first and second probably come somewhat more close together.

St. Matthew and St. Mark's word, *After a little while—after a while*, may be interpreted by St. Luke's *After the space of an hour*. 3. It is not stated here that St. Peter is still at the fire, but it seems clear that he is in the midst of the servants, as several take part this time in questioning him : *They came that stood by and said : Surely thou art one of them ?* (St. Matt.).

*They that stood by said again to Peter* (St. Mark). Another certain man affirmed (St. Luke). *One of the servants (a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off), saith to him : Did I not see thee with Him in the Garden ?*

4. All the persons here mentioned may form part of one group, and ask these questions, or make these affirmations quickly following one another.

5. At what time of the night does this occur ?

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who tells us that our Lord when prophesying in the Cenacle, used the words : *before the cock crow twice*. He also is the only one who records that after the first denial, *the cock crew*.

The question arises : Is there every night a first and a second crowing of the cock at a fixed hour ? Opinions on this point vary. Some well versed in natural history tell us that the first crowing was the effect of the tumultuous arrival of the soldiers and servants, which awoke the cocks from their sleep. Adopting this opinion, we may perhaps fix the first denial and the first crowing of the cock shortly after 1 o'clock in the morning, the second denial perhaps half an hour later, at 1.45. The third denial then, and the second crowing of the cock, would come towards the end of the third night watch, that is, towards 3 o'clock, a.m., according to our reckoning.

A. *He began to curse and swear.*

On this third occasion also, we notice how sin grows. *He began to curse and swear that he knew not the Man*. He calls God to witness that he is speaking the truth, and he utters imprecations against himself, if he is speaking any falsehood.

"Mother of God, Refuge of sinners, pray for us sinners, that we may not sin ; but if we are so unhappy as to sin, that we may not allow sin to abide in our soul, and grow ; but may quickly remember that *we have an Advocate with the Father, thy Son, Jesus Christ the Just*" (1 St. John ii.).

*Let not the sun go down upon your anger*, St. Paul writes. Ought we to lie down at night to sleep, with sin of any kind unforgiven ? Theologians hold it to be a grave sin, if a priest, by refusing to hear a confession when he can do it, causes a man to remain even one night in mortal sin. If so, how terribly is he duped, who, after sin, is persuaded by the father of lies to remain weeks and months without absolution. Unclean animals wallowing in the mire give some faint conception of the depravity of such souls. The Holy Spirit mentions among the rewards attached to almsgiving this one : *From the merciful all these things shall be taken away, and they shall not wallow in sins* (Ecclesi. xxiii.).

B. *Again therefore Peter denied.*

St. Ambrose and another holy Father seem to think that St. Peter did not sin grievously. The few who follow

this opinion try to show that there was something mysterious in his words when he denied. They quote, too, the instance of Chusai, who, in order to befriend David his master, pretended to have renounced him and gone over to Absalom. They say that St. Peter was carried away by his great desire to *see the end*, and to know all that should befall his beloved Master, and through fear of being turned out, used equivocal words. St. Chrysostom, however, St. Augustine, and with them most other commentators on the Gospel, hold that the blessed Apostle was permitted to fall grievously.

C. They give some reasons why his fall was permitted by Divine Providence.

1. That the Church of Christ may have a Pastor who *can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err : because he himself also is compassed with infirmity*. St. Peter is naturally self-reliant and impetuous. A man of that character when placed in authority might be inclined to lord it over his subjects, as the *Kings of the Gentiles* do. Christ Jesus, on the contrary, lays down for His Vicar this rule : *He that is the leader, let him become as he that serveth* (St. Luke xxiii.).

2. Our Lord, Who makes all things, even sin, co-operate unto good for His elect, foresees, moreover, what an example to His Church will be the life-long contrition and penance of His Vicar. So that the blessed angels will be able to say : *Felix Petri culpa*.

3. The fall of Peter and his contrition will effectually cure all the jealousy of the other Apostles and disciples, and make them see that with our Lord, *the race is not to the swift* : but that He chooses and elects the lowly.

4. We remember also the principle laid down by our Lord to St. Paul : *Virtue is perfected in infirmity*. Our Lord having seen Lucifer fall through pride, and Adam and Eve sin because they wish to be as gods, abhors pride ; and tolerates sin in order that the remembrance of sin may cure pride.

D. *Again therefore Peter denied*.

We may call to mind some events that prepared the way for his fall.

1. When our Blessed Saviour said to Peter, *Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now*, he answered with some want of humility : *Why cannot I follow Thee ? I will lay down my life for Thee*. Our Blessed Saviour, however, has compassion on him, and thinks more of the love that dictates this answer than of the admixture of presumption by which the bright gold is dimmed.

2. When our Saviour said : *All you shall be scandalised in Me this night* : again Peter answered : *Although all shall be scandalised in Thee I will never be scandalised*. Here again love is spoiled by self-reliance and self-esteem, which moves him to set himself above the rest.

3. Again our Lord rejoins : *This night thou wilt deny Me thrice*. St. Peter, with too much irreverence, holds to his own judgment : *Yea, though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee*.

4. In the Garden our Saviour earnestly warned him to pray, and spoke to him by name ! But St. Peter did not then believe that the flesh was so weak.

5. Lastly, as Josue, because he did not first consult the Lord, was tricked into a pernicious alliance with the Gabaonites, so St. Peter, without counsel or inspiration from his Master, enters rashly into the house of Christ's enemies and has evil communication with very unfit and unblest companions.

From all that has passed in the courtyard it seems tolerably clear that neither Judas nor the disciple who came with Peter, was there during the denials. The other disciple who came with Peter and *who was known to the High Priest*, has probably been allowed to go up to the judgment-hall, to witness what passes there.

## STATION VII.

*And he began to curse and to swear, saying: I know not this Man of Whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny Me (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And the Lord turning looked on Peter: and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as He had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice (St. Luke xxiii.).*

A. By this time, as we have seen, the trial of Jesus in the hall above is ended, and sentence pronounced: *He is guilty of death.* The Priests and Ancients have handed Him over to the custody of the servants, and the guards of the Temple, and have retired to rest. These guards have the strictest orders to shut Him up most carefully in the dungeon reserved for great criminals. They therefore lead Jesus down the steps from the hall of judgment to the court below. In order to reach the dungeon whither they are leading their prisoner they pass through this courtyard. The fourth watch of the night is near at hand. That is to say, it is close upon three o'clock in the morning, and St. Peter has just uttered with oaths and imprecations the words: *I know not the Man of Whom you speak.* For the last time, yes, thanks to the infinite charity of our Lord, for the last time in all his life, he has denied his Master, when suddenly he sees the procession passing through the door of the judgment-hall and coming down the steps. They hasten along the courtyard towards the dungeon. His Divine Master's back is turned towards him. The second cock crow has begun, but he heeds it not. With trouble and misery in his heart his eye is now riveted on his Lord, and he sees Him beaten and bruised and cruelly dragged along, and passing away from him, it may be for ever. Suddenly Jesus turns round and fixes His Eyes for a short moment on the eyes of His Apostle, and then turns back again to walk on His way to His prison.

Once more the crowing of the cock is heard; but this time it cannot pass unheeded. It is like the voice of the trumpet that shall wake the dead to life. It is like that loud cry at Bethany that brought Lazarus out of his grave.

B. *In divers manners* our Blessed Saviour can speak to us. In this hour His silent eyes have spoken a word as powerful as that word uttered in the beginning: *Let there be light.* Some holy servants of the Lord favoured with revelations concerning the Sacred Passion seem to think that, after the passing of Jesus, some hours of agonising attrition passed, before the fallen Apostle was restored to grace and love; but the opposite opinion is well supported, that St. Peter's restoration to grace and love was instantaneous. *In ictu oculi*, at the first glance from our Saviour's Eye, that thick darkness, *come up from the lowest and deepest hell*, is scattered and cleared away—and for ever. *Night shall be no more*, Apostle of the Lord, *thy sun shall go down no more: and thy moon shall not decrease: for the Lord shall be there for an everlasting light. Iniquity shall no more be heard in thy land—salvation shall possess thy walls: and praise thy gates—I am the Lord, thy Saviour and thy Redeemer* (Isaiah lx.).

Some penitents pass through a long period of attrition to reach this loving contrition; but, as has been said, it is thought that St. Peter was raised at once from sin to fervent love.

C. *The Lord turning looked on Peter.*

Till the Lord turned and looked on him, the crowing of the cock had no effect. St. Luke tells us the order of this great conversion. *The Lord turning looked on Peter, and then he remembered the word of the Lord: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

No voice, not the voice of man or angel, can raise us from death to life till the Lord turns and looks on us.

*"Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos." Thou wilt turn round, Lord Jesus, and wilt bring us to life. Show to us, also, Thy mercy and grant us Thy salvation* (Psalm lxxiv.).

"Turn Thine eyes of mercy on us, Lord Jesus, and show us Thy Father and our Father, Thy God and our God, Whom we have offended and abandoned."

"Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, Holy Mother of God, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus, Whom we have betrayed and denied."

#### STATION VIII.

*And Peter remembered the word which the Lord had said to him, and he began to weep (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And going forth he wept bitterly (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And Peter going out wept bitterly (St. Luke xxii.).*

There is a different reading in some copies of the Greek text, which interpreters render: *Covering his head he wept.*

#### A. *Going forth he wept bitterly.*

One immediate effect of his conversion is that he hastens away from the occasion of his fall. His heart is turned again entirely to his Master, but he does not stay any more to *see the end*. His eyes are opened to see his own frailty; and every other wish must give place to the preservation of his soul from further sin.

Domine Jesu, noverim me: noverim te.

Give me grace, Lord Jesus, to know all my own badness and weakness; and all Thy goodness, compassion, and charity.

B. *He began to weep.* Early Christian writers tell us that his tears and his contrition ceased not till he expired on his cross. He was a penitent, a man of compunction through life. Pulse, we are told, was his food. The ground, or a hard board, his bed. And wherever he is spending the night, in bed or in the fishing-boat, at the hour of the cock crow his tears begin again to flow. Nicephorus the historian states that his eyes were habitually bloodshot through his continual weeping.

#### C. *He began to weep.*

His advice to Bishops, in after years, is that they are not to rule as *lording it over their clergy*, but *being made, a pattern of the flock from the heart*. He was an admirable pattern of humble penance to the Church; *the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit* (1 St. Peter iii.). The effect of his penitential and contrite and humble life was so salutary, that, as has been said, holy souls might well exclaim: *Felix Petri culpa*.

An ancient writer treating of the 50th Psalm, *Miserere*, says to David: "By causing tears to flow down the cheeks of generations to come, you have perpetuated your own tears, so that they are never dried up. It was a great grace to all mankind that a man sinned who so thoroughly atoned for his sin." Even so, may we say that it has greatly served the Christian Church to have for its first shepherd one who had fallen, and been such a pattern of compunction and penance.

#### D. *He went out and wept bitterly.*

Appearing on a certain day to St. Bridget, St. Peter speaks to her of his fall. "As often," he said, "as I recollected how much I had sinned, and how I denied Him, I wept bitterly, because I now had learned to love perfectly; and tears were a gladness to me, and as savoury food. Have you not heard how completely forgetful I had become? For I had been thoroughly instructed in the ways of the Lord; and had bound myself by oath to live and die with my God. Yet when questioned, at the first word of a woman I denied the Truth. And why? Because God left me to myself; and I did not know myself.

"But what did I do afterwards? Then indeed I began to study myself; how of myself I was nothing; and I arose and ran back to God, the Truth, Who imprinted on my heart such a remembrance of His Name, that never after, either when scourged, or when standing in the presence of tyrants, could I forget Him."

E. *He wept bitterly.* We are sometimes ashamed to

confess our sins; but we see here that if to sin is shameful, to confess our sins is glory to God and great honour to ourselves.

Men sometimes ask whether their forgiven sins will be made known at the Judgment. We have the answer in this scene. The sins of St. Peter and St. Magdalen and all other penitents are changed by contrition into bright jewels. One reason why lost souls will cry out in such anguish, *We fools!* is this, that they see now how easily they could have repented and won mercy, as others did who had sinned as much as they had.

*F. Going out, he wept bitterly.*

We must beg of the Blessed Apostle to obtain for us some share of his lasting compunction; that we may treasure up that word of the Holy Ghost: *Be not without fear about sin forgiven* (Eccclus. v.); understanding, however, the Sacred Word aright; for we are not told to live always doubting anxiously whether our sins be forgiven; but, even if we knew by revelation that our sins are forgiven, not to cast aside the remembrance of them, but to continue in the spirit of holy fear and compunction. With Zachæus we must say: *I will repay four-fold.* "I will repay abundantly the wrong I have done to my God, and to my neighbour." *Be not without fear about sin forgiven; and lay not sin upon sin.*

Observe the last words: *Lay not sin upon sin.* Because, if immediately after confession we cast our sins behind our back, and think no more of them, there is every danger of relapse, we shall *lay sin upon sin.*

*G. Going out, he wept bitterly.*

We must also beg of the Blessed Apostle to obtain for us the grace not to be content with attrition; and not to rest till we have secured for our souls that loving contrition which blots out sin even if absolution cannot be had; yes, and before absolution is pronounced, provided we have the desire of sacramental confession as soon as it is practicable.

*H. He wept bitterly.*

*Who like the Lord our God, who looketh down on the low things in Heaven and on earth, lifting up the poor out of the dunghill?* (Psaln cxii.).

Who but our most gracious and patient God, *easy to forgive evil*, could have devised this plan by which we can, through contrition, change our sins into everlasting jewels, which the *thief cannot steal, nor the moth consume?*

*I. He wept bitterly.*

We hire masters to teach us many things. We must not forget this one thing necessary, to learn to weep for past sins. It behoves us to make a study of contrition; to understand well what a true act of contrition is. Oh, what a cruel disappointment it is at a very critical examination to find that we have prepared the wrong matter! Infinitely more to find at the Judgment that we have brought with us spurious contrition instead of genuine. Patiently and perseveringly we must learn our lesson till we are able to say from our hearts: I am sorry, truly sorry, that I have offended—

1. My good God.
2. My loving Creator and my Father.
3. My most merciful Redeemer.
4. Further, we must examine carefully when we prepare for confession whether we have joined to our sorrow good *hope* in the abundant redemption of Jesus Christ; whether we have a firm confidence that His wounds will cry louder than our sins, and win for us, not only forgiveness for the past, but abundant strength against future dangers.
5. We must also test our contrition by seeing diligently whether we have a good and sufficient purpose of amendment.

6. Then, too, we must wisely consider whether, with Zachæus, we wish very much to repair all the wrong we have done to God and to man.

7. One very sure sign of contrition is when the penitent is able to say humbly with the Prodigal: *I am no longer worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired*



*servants.* And when with the Good Thief, we can accept troubles and sufferings and shame saying: *We are receiving the just reward of our deeds.*

8. Lastly, while begging earnestly and with persevering importunity for loving contrition, we must carefully reject the delusion that the words, *Rend your hearts and not your garments*, mean that outward penance avails nothing. No outward forms, it is true, can profit, if there be not interior grace; but as interior diseases of the body show themselves on the surface, and inward good health manifests itself in the brightness of the eye and freshness of the countenance, so inward contrition must break forth into outward penance. And, moreover, we gather from the lives of the holy, that the grace of strong, loving contrition is, as a rule, granted in reward for deeds of outward penance. *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv). Hope, and love, and loving contrition grow out of humble practices of penance.

J. The question is asked: Did St. Peter lose his faith during those unhappy hours in the outer court? The holy Fathers and learned commentators seem to be unanimous, or nearly so, in their answer: that his faith did not fail, according to the prophetic word of our Saviour: *I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail.* He had not the firmness to profess outwardly. He sinned, as many Christians afterwards sinned, under persecution, by a want of courage. And this outward denial was often called apostasy, but like other grievous sins, the outward sin might be committed without destroying inward faith.

K. Holy writers commenting on that word of our Lord: *And thou when thou shalt be converted, confirm thy brethren*, observe, that not only by preaching and teaching the faith did he confirm his brethren, but also greatly by his persevering contrition and practice of penance.

L. *He wept bitterly.*

How well he afterwards repaid his sin by loving

much, he himself disclosed to St. Bridget. "So fervent was I in my hatred of sin, so fired with zeal to promote holiness, that 'if I could have converted the whole world to God, I would not for a moment have spared either my life or labours.'"

M. St. Mark in his Gospel twice mentions that St. Peter was at the fire *warming himself*. As St. Peter told him many other things that we read in his Gospel, was it he who wished this fact to be recorded, which he afterwards deplored? We may be sure that this thought would intensify his contrition, that he was warming himself while his Master was in chains and covered with bruises. There are times when self-indulgence seems more unpardonable. Urias could not be persuaded to go into his house to eat and drink and sleep, while his general and his fellow-soldiers were lying on the battlefield.

We spend our lives going round about the holy altar on which the Sacred Passion is perpetuated. So that when we indulge ourselves unduly, we have reason to lament with St. Peter that we are warming ourselves while our Lord is in chains and covered with bruises.

N. The story of our Lord's life is told in two words: "*Sabdius erat*"—*He was subject*. These other two words: "*Calefaciebatur se*"—*he was warming himself*, is a short epitome of a selfish, sensual life. Even in prayer, sometimes, love of our own comfort predominates.

As in these chapters some thoughts have been borrowed from the book called *The Mystic City of God*, by the Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, commonly called Mary of Agreda (the town in which she lived), it is necessary to give some information about her and her writings. When they were first published, one of the official censors appointed to pronounce upon them was Father Andreas Mendo, of the Society of Jesus. From Father de Backer's Catalogue we learn that this Father de Mendo lectured on Sacred Scripture with distinction at Salamanca; was Rector of the Irish College in the same city; was appointed Preacher before the Court; and was author of several works on Moral Theology, on questions of Canon Law, and other subjects.

His commendation of the writings of the Abbess is very strong:

"As I read them through, emotions of astonishment and admiration were as many as there are lines in the volumes. I have learned more from these volumes concerning the questions treated in them than I have from the many books which I have in the course of years studied with persevering diligence. This is due to the clearness, the cleverness, the depth of thought with which the subjects are handled. It is easy to see that the doctrine is from Heaven; and that a supernatural hand is guiding the pen. The book is a precious mine which has been discovered to enrich the Church.

"One thing excites surprise: that a woman could write such a masterly work in which is discovered a rare knowledge of all the Sacred Books; and in which great light is shed on many passages in the Holy Scriptures, and many interpretations suggested which are a wonder, when we consider that the writer had never been trained by a course of theological studies.

"Scholastic questions are also frequently explained tersely and with great clearness. Nowhere do we discover traces of temerity or ignorance.

"She wrote these volumes simply out of deference to the commands of her Superiors; and also in obedience to commands from our Lord and His Holy Mother.

"The commands from her Superiors were not given till the spirit of Sister Mary of Jesus had been carefully studied by appointed confessors, who were eminent theologians. The Superiors of the Order, moreover, did not act in haste. Nothing was published till several years after the death of the Abbess, and after her writings had been again submitted to a severe censorship."

The Jesuit Father continues: "By her own unaided powers, the Venerable Mother could never have comprehended mysteries so abstruse. Human imagination could not of itself sketch out such scenes. Human intellect could not have produced so admirable a harmony. Pious meditations could not have linked together such a precious chain.

"To give my assent to the publication of these writings I wanted no other persuasion than the reading of the volumes; and I think they will have the same effect on others.

"True it is that many events and much information about the prerogatives of our Lady, not found in other writings, are met with here; but let any one read the work through, and, I think, all suspicion of rashness will disappear. It has pleased God to communicate many lights to St. Catherine, St. Bridget, St. Teresa of Jesus, and in later years to Marina d'Escobar. The hand of God is not shortened. One thing that inspires confidence in the writings of the Venerable Abbess is the fact that for twenty-five years she was, by dispensation, re-elected to govern her convent, and continued in office till her death, with great satisfaction both to her Superiors and her subjects.

"By the providence of God it happened that the General of the Franciscan Order assisted her on her death-bed, and testified

warmly to her remarkable obedience, her profound humility and singular patience; which virtues justified the high idea commonly entertained of her sanctity. It was he who, after looking at her writings, wished them to be again carefully revised, in order that her own Sisters in Religion, and the faithful outside also, might benefit by them."

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FOURTH NIGHT WATCH.

From 3 to 6 A.M.

## SCENE I.

## THE DUNGEON.

## STATION I.

*And the men that held Him, mocked Him and struck Him*  
(St. Luke xxii. 63).

A. The command of the High Priests, before they retire to rest, is again and again repeated and enforced with stern threats, that Jesus of Nazareth must be guarded and watched with the utmost strictness, lest He escape. Wo to His keepers if they are negligent!

The Rulers are, as usual, devising *vain things against the Lord, and against His Christ*. All the guards may safely retire to rest with their masters. Every door may stand open. One little child is strong enough and wise enough to keep Jesus safe, for He Himself wills to be a captive. But "Alas! Sion," He is saying in His Heart, *these things are hidden from thy eyes*.

B. Therefore, having led Him through the outer court to the prison, they there carry out their orders with merciless severity.

In the account which the Spanish Abbess, Mary of Jesus, has left of this scene of the Passion as shown to her, the prison is described as an underground dungeon, reserved for the worst criminals.

According to that ancient cruel rule, "*væ victis*," this dungeon is so arranged as to aggravate all the sorrows of

the doomed prisoner. The light of Heaven can scarcely enter; the fresh air not at all.

The stench from long-accumulated filth has poisoned the confined air. In the middle of that rocky floor stands a pillar of about two feet in height. This pillar is said to be one of the three still preserved in Jerusalem and Rome.

As it is seen by the Abbess, it appears to be like a pointed rock projecting from the ground. To this pillar an iron ring is attached, and to this ring His wrists are tightly tied. His legs are also bound to the pillar. Secured in this way, He cannot lie down, and cannot stand upright, but must remain bent double. Some of the more active of the Priests and Ancients wait there to see the orders carried out; and during the whole time spent in leading Him to the prison, and making Him secure, the word of the Evangelist is abundantly verified: *The men that held Him, mocked and struck Him*.

Like everything else during the Sacred Passion, this work is done quickly. The Priests and Ancients, as soon as they feel sure that His escape is impossible, make haste to quit the fetid air. But before they go, they pour out parting words of derision and blasphemy. "You will not be able, Jesus, to do much towards building up the Temple to-night." "You will want your twelve legions of angels to help you."

"*Jesus autem tacebat.*" *He opened not His mouth. He is dumb as a lamb before his shearer.*

They depart, and the door is locked and barred, and our Lord remains, to our human eyes, alone. Our poor wisdom would say that the word is fulfilled: *I am become miserable and bowed down to the end* (Psalm xxxviii.).

C. But, as He said in the Supper-room: *I am not alone*. The blessed angels are all watching round their King. And in the narrative from which some of these details are taken, we are told that full of pity for the exhausted and weary Body of their Lord tortured by this new cruel

device, the blessed angels beg to be allowed to loosen the bonds of their King. But His meek answer is like His word in the Garden: "*Sinite modo*". "Let things go on. It is not too much. I am the Sinner: Do not pity Me. Pity those who do not know Me and will not love Me."

But there are other spirits there, besides the twelve legions from Heaven. The spirits of darkness are watching most earnestly, and are not at all content with what has been done. They want neither sleep nor rest. They have still much work to do. It is their hour; but their short hour is passing quickly. They are in haste.

## STATION II.

*And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him: Prophecy; and the servants struck Him with the palms of their hands (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And the men that held Him, mocked Him and struck Him. And they blindfolded Him and smote His face. And they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him (St. Luke xxii.).*

### A. They blindfolded Him.

The Holy Spirit has revealed to us elsewhere the explanation of the scene that follows. The Priests are tired out, and the Ancients. The soldiers are long since asleep in the barracks. The servants, too, want rest like their masters. But the fallen angels, rulers of the darkness, want no rest, and cannot rest. They have most urgent work to do. Every moment Lucifer is becoming more and more restless, and more determined to find out who and what Jesus is, whether only a holy man, or something more than man. He heard Him say to the High Priests, *I am the Son of God*; and he is filled with inexpressible eagerness to know what this word means. Is it a vain

boast? Is there truth in the title? And if truth there be, how much truth? To what extent is He Son of God?

B. As has been said, the revelation made by the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom, lets us penetrate the veil of separation that hides the unseen world from us, and be present at the deliberations of these malicious spirits. What is their plan? *He calleth Himself the Son of God. He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true: let us prove what shall happen to Him, and we shall know what His end shall be.*

*For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of His enemies.*

*Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience.*

*These things they thought, the Holy Spirit adds, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them (Wisdom ii.).*

Here we have the plan of Lucifer fully detailed, and it corresponds exactly with what we read in the accounts given by the privileged servants of our Lord, of what was shown to them.

Lucifer, then, and his colleagues are watching most attentively the bearing of our Saviour under suffering, in order to see if they can find some traces of unholy impatience. Hitherto they have not discovered the smallest sign of imperfection; but they think that enough has not been done to conquer His endurance. Therefore they strongly urge His gaolers to heap on more atrocities: *Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience.*

C. The head warden, therefore, who is in charge, and entrusted with the keys, moved by these instigations of the unseen spirits, picks out some of the most degraded and brutal among his fellows; and possibly, too, calls back one or another of the Priests and Rulers who are still lingering about, and invites them to go down to enjoy some special pastime, and make some further experiments on the prisoner.

For the sake, then, of indulging their malicious cruelty, they descend to the underground dungeon and brave all the filth and stench and infected air.

*It is your hour, our Saviour said, and the power of darkness.* In every scene of the Passion we must keep in mind that the unseen spirits of wickedness and darkness are inspiring and guiding and goading to madness the cruelty and malice of the men who are their dupes, and whom they despise.

"From the snares of the devil, O Lord, deliver us."

*D. They blindfolded Him and they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee?*

*"Attendite."* Our Lord's Divinity has been outraged in the judgment-hall above, now Lucifer directs his ministers to blaspheme and scoff at Him as a Prophet.

*E. And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him.*

Those who have considered these words of St. Luke have at times been in doubt whether they mean that blasphemies too indecent to be written are uttered against our Lord. The writings of the Spanish Abbess which have been referred to give us a useful light on this point.

It was shown to her that in this scene of the Sacred Passion, where the servants are acting without any authority, or any forms of law, the spirits of darkness see their opportunity, and strongly urge their dupes and ministers to strip our Saviour of His clothes and try His meekness and His patience by adding indecency to cruelty; but this is not to be. For, in the first place, our Blessed Lady is, as has been said, present in spirit at every scene of the Passion, seeing every detail, hearing every word, and through an effort of the Divine power, feeling every blow and every insult most vividly. As the second Eve she is allowed to drink so largely with her Son of the sacred chalice, that every bruise and wound inflicted upon His Body is in due measure reproduced in her. So much so that, when the cords tied tightly round the wrists of Jesus are inflicting

cruel agony on Him, she is sharing pain to such an extent that the Abbess, in her vision, sees the drops of blood oozing from under the finger-nails of our Lady's hands. To her also, as to St. Bridget, it is shown several times during the scenes of the Passion, that the tears falling from the eyes of the Blessed Mother are drops of blood.

Thus then, as might have been expected, the primeval prophecy is having its fulfilment during this night as well as on the morrow. The woman is enduring the fierce assault of the prince of darkness by the side of the second Adam, her Son: *The dragon shall persecute the woman as well as the Man* (Apoc. xii.).

*F. And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him.*

But this is not all. A further light is communicated to this holy servant of God in her contemplations, by which she sees that not only is the Ever-Blessed Mother present, and witnessing and sharing everything suffered by her Divine Son, but moreover for the greater humiliation of Lucifer, he is made to feel throughout the Passion that, as the first Eve was his dupe and his ally, the second Eve is his determined enemy, with power to baffle him. Consequently, whenever Satan attempts anything not in keeping with the decrees of the Eternal Father, it is through the will of Holy Mary that he is coerced and humbled and compelled to desist.

Hence, as it was made known to this holy Abbess, the blessed Angels throughout the Passion not only abound in reverence and obedience to their King, but also, by God's appointment, with most loyal and tender reverence wait upon their Queen, who is conscious of their presence; and their orders are to execute every wish of her heart.

In this hour, therefore, as at every other moment of the Passion, when she sees the spirits of wickedness goading men on to add indecency to cruelty, at once her rebuke and peremptory command scares and confounds

them, and they are conscious that all persistence is vain. As she said to her God : *Be it done according to Thy word* ; so now His decree in her favour is : " Be it done, Blessed Mother of My Son Jesus, according to thy word " .

*By me, His handmaid, He hath fulfilled His mercy, which He promised to the house of Israel, and He hath killed the enemy of His people by my hand this night (Judith xiii.).*

*G. Some began to spit on Him.*

These picked men, therefore, these privileged tormentors, these willing ministers of Satan, are obliged to content themselves with carrying on more thoroughly the work of outrage begun in the judgment-hall above by their masters and models, the High Priests and Ancients. They loosen, then, the ropes that fasten the wrists of Jesus to the strong iron ring, and now use the low column as a chair of torture and mockery for Him. It is His Prophet's chair.

And first they do as they had seen their masters do. They draw near one by one, and in the foulest and coarsest way they can, they cover His sacred face with spittle and phlegm ; the difference between the works done here and the outrages in the judgment-hall being that there His tormentors had some pretence of legality. Here all is low and brutal lawlessness.

In the 68th Psalm, which tells us so many things concerning the Sacred Passion, we read : *They that drank wine made Me their song*. These men who have not only to watch, but to brave the foulness of this dungeon, may very probably have fortified themselves with wine to give them nerve for their labour. They may be these men foreshown in the Psalm : *They that drank wine made Me their song*.

*H. SOME BEGAN TO SPIT ON HIM AND COVER HIS FACE AND BUFFET HIM, AND THE SERVANTS STRUCK HIM WITH THE PALMS OF THEIR HANDS (St. Mark xiv.).*

In this passage we notice that the Evangelist seems to have before his mind two classes of tormentors : Some buffeted Him, and the servants struck Him with the palms of their hands.

As has been said, therefore, it is possible that even here in this place of horrors, some of the desecrated Priests, or the Ancients, are still taking part in the orgies ; or else it may be that the Evangelist is throwing together into one sentence what was done upstairs by the Rulers, and what is done here by the servants.

This at least is certain : that some with their clenched fists strike heavy blows upon His Body ; and some with their open hands strike Him on His sacred face ; and holy writers remind us that in such cases the hand may mean a soldier's gauntlet.

Again, commentators also notice that the Greek text need not necessarily mean a slap with the hand—but it might be that they struck His face with their sandals.

*They hated Me without cause (St. John xv.).*

*I. Some began to cover His face.*

To the Heart of our Blessed Saviour each new torment is a precious gain. He has foreknown and has accepted and welcomed each outrage, each blow ; and they who have been specially enlightened while contemplating the Passion, tell us that the fire that is burning in His Heart, despite the bruises and blows and spittle that are disfiguring His sacred face, lights up His features with a beauty and a glory that is beginning to amaze and terrify the unfortunate dupes of Satan who are being urged on to test His meekness and prove His patience. Their bad courage is about to fail them, when the father of lies whispers that it is only the power of Beelzebub and magical trickery that is altering His countenance, and that they must defeat this artifice by covering His eyes, which they have not courage to look upon.

A filthy cloth, then, as foul as everything else in this dungeon, is found ready there. It is used, doubtless, first to wipe His face that they may not soil their hands when they strike Him, and then it is tied as a veil over His eyes, that they may begin a new series of cruelties.

J. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face; and they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who it is that struck Thee?*

"*Attendite.*" *O ye who pass by, stay here a little while.* Actors on the stage appear at different times in new costumes and new characters. The Sacred Passion is the great drama planned by the everlasting charity of God to draw the hearts of men to Himself. Therefore it is arranged that our Saviour shall be presented to us in many different shapes and forms of sorrow, and speak to us in such *divers ways*, that at last, in one way or the other, our hearts may be moved.

This picture of our Saviour blindfolded and buffeted is, among the rest, planned for our good with infinite charity and wisdom.

"*Fac cor amans Jesu mei*—Loving Heart of Jesus, do this for us, grant us grace that all the labour and the study of Thy everlasting charity, and all Thy suffering may not be in vain."

K. *They blindfolded Him and smote Him.*

Listen to the shouts of laughter when any one strikes a more cruel blow or utters a more coarse blasphemy. *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head. They that drank wine made Me their song. They have looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm lxviii. and xxi.).

L. Observe, too, with the eye of faith how Lucifer and his colleagues are watching most intently each new outrage, to see if it provokes any impatience; and then at once, not losing their terrible courage, suggest still further cruelties and mockeries.

"O God, our Father in Heaven, look on the face of Thy Christ: lead us not into temptation. From the snares and cruelty of the devil, Lord Jesus, deliver us. Grant us to serve Thee with some share of the courage and perseverance wherewith Lucifer sins against Thee."

M. *They blindfolded Him.*

Let us take notice how these unfortunate men, and more

especially any Priests and Ancients that may be present, persuade themselves that our Lord cannot see them; and with what derision they scoff at all His miracles and His character of Prophet; and how insultingly they challenge Him to prove His pretensions just by one single prophecy; and how they triumphantly and oracularly pronounce that His silence is proof positive that He is an impostor. Satan is wiser than they. The patient silence of our Lord is more and more disturbing him, and inclining him to the opinion that this Jesus of Nazareth may be more than man.

Again and again the wicked spirits say, as they gaze on Him, words akin to those spoken by their dupes, the Priests and Ancients: *Do you see that we prevail nothing?*

"O good Lord Jesus, gracious and compassionate, take from our foolish hearts every desire to prevail against Thee. May Thy Kingdom come. May Thy will be done."

N. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

Let us turn our eyes to the Ever-Blessed Mother, who is watching and listening and laying up all in her heart.

Alas! she knows that all this is only a beginning.

*What is it that has been done? The same that shall be done.* Does she not know how we so often and so habitually still live on under the impression that our God, our Father, does not see, and does not know, our acts, our words, our thoughts? They said: *How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?* (Psalm lxxii.).

Most of all, she sees us live on under the delusion that our Hidden God in the Blessed Eucharist is blindfolded and does not see us.

Oh, with what earnestness and perseverance ought each of us, priests and people, to repeat the cry which Holy Church encourages us so much to send up to Heaven: "O good and sweet Jesus, imprint on my soul lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity".

O. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

We must also notice how the repeated blows and bruises are disfiguring the sacred face more and more, so that

the prophecy is being thoroughly fulfilled: *His look was as it were hidden and despised.*

If then the Eternal Son of God can thus look like an outcast—no beauty in Him, *no comeliness, no sightliness, so that we should be desirous of Him*—what wonder if His holy servants here on earth are often seen on their sick-beds, or on the scaffold, or in the rags of their poverty, as if they were a fit reproach for men, and stricken by God? While contemplating Jesus in this disfigurement, we must learn to value the unsightly rags of His poor, and the disfigurement of the death-bed. *Look not on His countenance. Nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things which appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart* (1 Kings xvi.).

*P. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

In the story of holy Job we notice how Lucifer's insolent retort to God is that he has not been permitted to put forth his whole strength against His servant, so faithful to his Creator—otherwise he would certainly lose patience and curse God.

The spirit of the prince of darkness is now the same, only much intensified, ever full of hope that the next outrage, more cruel than all before, will at last conquer this Man made of the dust of the earth.

*Q. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

The Prophet of the Sacred Passion sets before us one more torture which no doubt is applied in this hour, though not mentioned in the Gospel:

*I have given My Body to the strikers and My cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me* (Isaiah l.).

Plucking out the hair from our Lord's beard is doubtless one of the cruel outrages inspired by the malignant spirit, whose whole strength is now put forth in order to test by outrages whether the patience of Jesus is more than human. *Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures. He calleth*

*Himself the Son of God. Let us see then if His words be true.*

*"Jesus autem lacebat"—He opened not His mouth.*

*R. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

*And I have given My cheeks to them that plucked them.* The unseen spirits of wickedness can devise no further torment at present. With unspeakable vexation and trouble they are forced to say again: *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* In times past when He came near, they cried out: *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God?* Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? Immeasurably more is His unalterable humility and meekness tormenting now these spirits of pride and malice.

*"From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord."*

*S. They blindfolded Him.*

Of the Blessed Mother we may say in the Prophet's words: *Weeping, she hath wept through the night, and her tears are on her cheeks.* Yet, while she contemplates the victory which the meekness of her Son is winning over the infernal powers, her heart, with ineffable contentment, is saying: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

Let us join our hearts with hers. *Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In international contests the champion who wins, wins for his whole nation; all are proud of him. So, too, our most loving Saviour, our Brother, is fighting and winning, not for Himself alone, but for the whole fallen and enslaved family.

"Benediction and glory and honour and praise be during this fourth watch of the night to this silent and victorious meekness of Christ Jesus, and to the humble and loving compassion of His Blessed Mother."



## STATION III.

*Then they did spit in His face and buffeted Him*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 67).

A. These savage men are tired out. These lovers of brutality, these experts in cruelty, these human beings possessed by unseen wicked spirits, they are all worn out. They, like their masters, feel a want of repose; and oh, wonder inconceivable! such is the length and breadth and height and depth of the charity and the meekness of our God, the Creator of these men, and their Father in Heaven, that He is ready to wait upon them, to conduct them to their rest; to maintain the stillness of the night for them, that they may find repose. *Who is like the Lord our God, gracious and patient and easy to forgive evil?* Oh, with what infinite joy would He forgive if men would turn to Him!

B. They are tired out, and so they take off the filthy clout from His eyes, and they begin their parting mockeries, asking Him: why He would not speak? why He would not tell who struck Him?

They add also their parting blows and slaps and buffets, and, as they had wiped His sacred face in order to strike without soiling their hands, so now that their work is done, in order to leave Him as they found Him, once more they cover His sacred face with phlegm and spittle.

What can they do worse? Among the Jews, spitting in the face was the extreme of indignity. When Moses cried to God for his sister struck with leprosy: *O God, I beseech Thee heal her. The Lord answered him: If her father had spitten upon her face, ought she not to have been ashamed for seven days at least? Let her be separated seven days without the camp* (Numbers xii.).

So that a child on whom her father had spitten is classed with the unclean lepers, to be separated for seven days. Jesus has been spitten upon by the sacred lips of

the Priests, from which nothing but truth is supposed to come. More strongly than by words, the lips of the Priests have declared Him a leper and an outcast.

But "*quanto vilior tanto carior*," the more He is outraged, the more dear He is to His watching Mother, and to the blessed angels, and to His Eternal Father.

C. *They blindfolded Him.*

All the work, however, done in this dungeon has been unauthorised and lawless; they must now, therefore, before they withdraw, besides spitting on His face, put all things back in the state in which they were when the Priests saw the gate of the dungeon closed and barred.

Once more, then, Jesus is bound; His wrists tightly fastened to the iron ring in the low column; His legs also bound to it with ropes. Thus they leave Him—as far as human eye can judge—*miserable and bowed down, a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with infirmity—a Man without help—the poor Man of the broken heart.*

D. "*Attendite.*" It is a fitting place to do what St. Ignatius recommends, to let our hearts give a little time to count up and measure all the different varieties of shame, of pain, of reproach, of outrage, which our Saviour, our Brother, the representative and Redeemer of our fallen race has undergone in this dungeon, and by which He has sanctified the fourth watch of the night. Mark the strained and most painful position chosen for His weary and exhausted Body; the suffering and agony caused while the cords and ropes are being fastened again; count the bruises from the blows and buffets; notice the livid marks on His pale and swollen face. Reckon up how many times He has been spit upon. Keep in mind, too, the multiplied words of blasphemy; and remember that foul, begrimed rag that covered His eyes; and forget not the sickening stench from the filth accumulated in that dungeon of pitiless cruelty, which reminds Him of the many who have been here saturated with suffering.

All their torments are now present to His most tender Heart. *O all you who pass by, He says to us most humbly, come and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow.*

"Come and see, too, whether I love you or not. Come and plead with Me, and see if there be anything more that I ought to do for your soul.

"I have suffered many things in this dungeon. For which of them all do you shun Me, and neglect Me, and keep aloof from Me, as from an austere enemy?"

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners."

*F. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

In this last watch of the night is fulfilled in a special manner the word of Jeremias: *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him. He shall be grieved with reproaches* (Lament. iii.). "*Saturabitur opprobriis.*" The Latin word conveys to our mind the idea: He shall be saturated with insults and outrages. That is to say, it is not only His Body and His sacred Face that are bruised and tormented, but the cruelties penetrate and reach to His tender and sensitive Heart. Through and through, as we say, He is bruised and wounded, and a Man of Sorrows, whose Body and Soul are steeped in pain and anguish. *Great as the sea is Thy destruction, Thy crushing sorrow.* The waters encompass Him, and, He says, *are come in even unto My Soul* (Psalm lxxviii.).

*F. They smote His face.*

And all the while, from the beginning to the end, He is not conquered, but is conquering. Though the waters are flooding His Soul, *many waters cannot quench charity, nor the floods drown it.* Picked men, selected tormentors, eminent in heartless cruelty and brutality, have been powerfully helped by all the malicious inventions of Satan, but all in vain.

*Do you see that we prevail nothing?*

And, as has been said, His victory is all for us. *Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through Christ Jesus. If we only stay a little while and look at Jesus fighting this*

our battle, virtue comes out from Him to us, and we too shall conquer the wicked spirits.

*G. They smote His face.*

What wonder that our Saviour, after having fought in this way and conquered Satan so thoroughly, expects us also to conquer him? He cannot but require from us patience and meekness and charity and a forgiving spirit, quite beyond heathen virtue. If all these scenes of the Passion could be blotted out, there might be something plausible in our excuses for our anger: "He provoked me; what could I do? No man could bear to be so insulted." But if these scenes of the Passion, the night watches and the day watches, are not gone by or forgotten, but are rendered perpetual and everlasting, these flimsy excuses for our anger will never avail us.

When we are brooding over our small grievances, St. Paul stops our mouths by saying: *Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood—striving against sin* (Hebrews xii.).

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.  
Passio Christi, conforta me.

*H. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

One part of our Blessed Saviour's most charitable plan is to colour with His sorrows every watch of the night and every watch of the day. For He well knows that Lucifer, our adversary and His adversary, goes about never tiring, every hour of the day and every hour of the night, seeking whom he may devour. *Our wrestling* is not only against men, who sometimes grow tired and want rest and sleep, but against the rulers of the world of this darkness: the spirits of wickedness, who never slumber and never sleep. Every hour of the day, and through all the watches of the night, we want help from our Saviour Jesus Christ, through Whom God has given us the victory.

What wonder, then, that to match the sleepless activity of Satan, He has instituted the perpetual, never-failing Sacrifice, in which, every hour from dawn to sunset and from the setting of the sun to the daybreak, He will Himself be on the altar, offering up all His Sacred Passion for us, and, by His sufferings and His Blessed Mother's compassion, crushing the serpent's head?

"Praise and thanks be every instant to the Most Holy and Most Divine Sacrament of the Altar!"

I. After such a charitable provision, now that every Christian sufferer and every tempted man can by looking on Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, draw strength out of His wounds, what wonder that He bids us all, in spite of Lucifer, hope always in Him, *from the morning watch until the night*, and through the dark hours of the night until the sunrise!

What wonder that He solemnly promises to His servants: *The sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night* (Psalm cxx.). *Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the thing that walks abroad in the dark, or of the noon-day devil* (Psalm xc.).

J. In this last watch of the night then, as at every other time, the spirits of wickedness are wakeful, and watching to see if perchance they can tempt the sleepless. The image of Jesus blindfolded and buffeted and spit upon is to such a powerful protection, if they are only so blessed as to make use of it.

*In the night I have remembered Thy name, O Lord Jesus, and have kept Thy law* (Psalm cxviii.).

K. If we think often and wisely of the watches of the Sacred Passion, we shall find ourselves more and more drawn to help the souls for whom He died by works of mercy during the day, and by prayer at night. *In the daytime the Lord hath commanded His mercy, and a canticle to Him in the night* (Psalm xli.).

About a quarter of a century has passed away since the death of the good old man who was long the champion of

the Catholic poor in this country. It was his habit, whenever he woke in the night, to rise from his bed and kneel down to say:—

*Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixa fuge plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.*

Do this for me, Mother blest,  
Firmly fix within my breast,  
Jesus with His Cross and wounds.

He wished not to forget the watches of the Passion by night or by day.

I. Speaking of the manna, the Wise Man writes, that though it could not be destroyed by fire, yet being warmed with a little sunbeam, it presently melted away. He adds the reason for this prodigy: *that it might be known to all that we ought to prevent the sun to bless Thee, O God, and adore Thee at the dawning of the light* (Wisdom xvi.). Does not the remembrance of Jesus bowed down in His dungeon, with His chains and fetters upon Him, and His face disfigured, plead with us still more persuasively to prevent the sun and to bless and adore Him at the dawning of the light? The first streaks of the daybreak are messengers which come to us, as Martha came to Mary, and whisper gently: *The Master is come and calleth thee—It is the hour for us to rise from sleep*, and hasten to visit Jesus in His narrow prison on the altar, where we are reminded of all His wonderful works, and among the rest, of His condition in the dungeon at the dawning of the light.

*O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day* (Psalm lxiii.).

M. Often we say to our Blessed Lord: "*De profundis*" —*Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice: may Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.*

"Now, dear Lord, Thou art the Suppliant." "Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O man, My brother, child of My Father, Whom I have loved so well; hear My cry, let thine ears give heed to My pleading."

"Only remember Me: for I was stolen away during the night from the peaceful garden of My Mother, and

from the olive-trees; and here, without fault of Mine, was cast into this dungeon. Only remember Me, and do Me this kindness to put men, who are My masters, in mind, not to take Me out of this dungeon, but to remember Me."

N. *I am become like to a pelican in the wilderness. I am like a night-raven in the house. I have watched and am become as a sparrow all alone on the house-top. All the day long My enemies reproached Me, and they that formerly praised Me did swear against Me.*

"*Attendite.*" Let us stay yet a while to contemplate our Blessed Saviour *all alone*; not on the house-top, but in His deep and dark and loathsome dungeon; watching and praying—oh, so earnestly—for us; waiting for the dawn that He may go forth again to His work of redemption, desiring that the moments be abbreviated, that the chalice of His Blood may quickly pass from Him into our souls.

O. *All alone!* Yet, He says once more: *I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*

*I am not alone*, because My Ever-Blessed Mother is with Me, watching and praying and suffering with Me.

*I am not alone*, because all My future disciples are with Me—a long-lived seed—who will from this hour remember Me and watch with Me.

"*Fac cor amans Jesu mei.* Oh, grant, most loving Heart of Jesus, that we may be of the number of those who watch with Thee and remember Thee."

P. *He shall sit solitary and hold His peace, because He hath taken it up upon Himself* (Lament. iii.).

Not one murmur, nor one complaint, escapes from the Heart of our Lord. *He knew all things that were to come*, when He offered Himself to the multitude in the Garden. He has carefully counted the cost; and of His own will *hath taken it all upon Himself*; because *He loved me*, and most freely and most willingly *delivered Himself up for me*.

Q. May the spectacle of Jesus bound and fettered cure

our souls of their cravings for undue liberty! May His sacred face, bruised and outraged, give us grace to abhor that sensual worship wickedly given to the wanton face, and wickedly covered by the wanton face!

May the sacred eyes blindfolded obtain tears of true contrition for our eyes, and grace to turn them away that *they may not see vanity!* (Psalm cxviii.).

The torn and dishevelled hair of our Saviour has moved multitudes of Christian women to follow St. Peter's counsel: *Whose adorning, let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, but the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit* (1st Peter iii.).

Queen Esther had never contemplated the scenes of the Passion; nor did she know as well as we do how in the prison-house of Hell there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*; yet of her we read: *Fearing the danger that was at hand, she had recourse to the Lord. And when she had laid away her royal apparel, she put on garments suitable for weeping and mourning; instead of divers precious ointments, she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled her body with fasts; and all the places in which before she was accustomed to rejoice, she filled with her torn hair. And she prayed to the Lord the God of Israel, saying: O my Lord, help me a desolate woman, and who have no other helper but Thee* (Esther xiv.).

R. *Sursum corda.* Contemplate how the vigilant providence of the Eternal Father is all the while watching most carefully over His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased; and how He has given His angels a charge over Him. *Wisdom forsook not the Just when He was sold: but delivered Him from sinners. She went down with Him into the pit. And in bonds she left Him not till she brought Him the sceptre of the Kingdom, and power against those that oppressed Him; and showed them to be liars that had accused Him, and gave Him everlasting glory* (Wisdom x.).

S. "O Lord Jesus, bound, deliver us poor sinners from our bonds

"O Lord Jesus, waiting in the dungeon for the day-dawn, make haste to help the expecting souls of Thy servants in Purgatory.

"O Lord Jesus, watching for us at the daybreak in Thy tabernacle, draw our waking thoughts to Thee."

## SCENE II.

### THE JUDGMENT-HALL.

#### STATION I.

*As soon as it was day the Ancients of the people and the Chief Priests and Scribes came together, and they brought Him into their Council (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And when morning was come all the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people took council against Jesus, that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And straightway in the morning, the Chief Priests holding a consultation with the Ancients and the Scribes, and the whole Council (St. Mark xv.).*

*A. The Chief Priests with the Ancients and the Scribes and the whole Council.*

Here then we have, as the commentators teach us, a full meeting of the Great Council of the Sanhedrim. Those who are acquainted with Jewish law tell us that it was enjoined that in capital causes, when there was question of death, the whole Council must be assembled. The midnight meeting was on this count illegal; and also because it was held, contrary to law, during the night-time. All defects, therefore, are now to be rectified.

Messengers have been busy since the cock-crow. All have been warned that the business is most urgent, and that for many grave reasons a full attendance is necessary. One of the many reasons is, as has been said, that they wish to have a legal and valid sentence of death. Another, and still more urgent, is that they want to have such an

imposing gathering of the important men of Jerusalem as shall overawe the Roman Governor.

*B. The whole Council.*

It is, however, taken for granted that some few who are, in secret, disciples of Jesus, or inclined to become so, are absent; either because as known partisans they were not summoned; or because, if summoned, they do not wish to take any part in the sacrilegious proceedings. Joseph of Arimathea is one of these: a *Councillor*, St. Luke writes, *a good and a just man (the same had not consented to their counsel and doings)* (St. Luke xxiii.). These last words might perhaps imply that he was present in this Council, and in vain protested against the unjust sentence.

Nicodemus and Gamaliel also think as Joseph does.

One or two other names are added by some authors.

*They brought Him into their Council.*

Where was this Council held?

We are told that before the coming of the Romans, when the Great Council of the Sanhedrim had authority to pronounce sentence of death, it was prescribed that for the trial of capital causes they must meet within the precincts of the Temple; but when the power of life and death was taken away from them, they no longer considered this solemnity necessary. Some writers, however, think that even now, in the days of our Lord, they held their court for the trial of great criminals in a hall near the Temple; and from the fact that Judas brought his money to the *Chief Priests and Ancients* and cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, they conclude that the meeting of the Sanhedrim took place in this hall near the Temple.

Other commentators, however, are of opinion that the morning meeting is held in the same judgment-hall of the Palace of the Priests where the condemnation was pronounced the night before. This opinion we shall follow, as it seems to fit in well with the Gospel narrative, and what is related of Judas can, as we shall see, be reconciled with it.

As we reckon the first watch of the day from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m., and as the daybreak on this first Good Friday came a little earlier than 6 a.m., this Council in the early morning may, for convenience' sake, be joined on with the wicked work of the night.

*C. The Chief Priests holding a consultation with the Ancients and the Scribes and the whole Council.*

We may contemplate the unholy activity and promptness of these unhappy Councillors, who are *met together against the Lord and against His Christ*.

If they are willing, after their labours of yesterday and their night watching, to cut short their sleep in the early morning in order to persecute Jesus, how grateful will He be to us if we deny ourselves, and rise betimes to do Him a most welcome honour by assisting at the Holy Mass, in which His Sacred Passion is renewed; a most welcome honour, because it gives Him the plea He desires for filling us with benediction.

D. *As soon as it was day.*

When we meet in the early hours, we say to each other: Good-morning! Good-day! How unreal and worthless these greetings sometimes are! For they cannot bring a blessing on an unblest day. If these evil Councillors salute each other with such good wishes for the day, we have a melancholy specimen of the mockery that can be enacted by lying tongues.

### SCENE III.

#### THE DUNGEON.

##### STATION I.

*The Chief Priests and the Scribes came together and they brought Him into the Council (St. Luke xxii. 66).*

A. *They brought Him into the Council.*

These words agree well with what the holy Abbess in her narrative of the Passion records, that those who had seen Jesus the night before in His dungeon, are anxious that all should now see to what a plight their arch-enemy, the great Prophet so dreaded, has by a little firmness and boldness been reduced. They all therefore go down in a body to the underground prison, to bring Him from thence. When the bars are drawn and the gate opened, at the first sight of the *Man without help, bowed down and miserable*,

so haggard and so disfigured, and so wasted away, they are taken aback and scared; and cannot believe that illness has made such a change. But after a while, when assured that this is really Jesus of Nazareth, Who was so bold, so arrogant, so defiant three days ago, they break out into uncontrolled derision.

"Samson broke his bonds. Jesus does not seem to be a Samson."

"He fed five thousand with loaves; He would have been glad, we imagine, of one loaf during this night."

"He hoped in the Lord. Let Him deliver Him, and we will believe."

"He is the Son of God. Let Him save Him, seeing He delighteth in Him."

All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head (Psalm xxi.).

"This spectacle here before our eyes is, beyond all doubt, proof convincing that He is an impostor and seducer. Make haste, bring Him to judgment. Do it quickly. Lead Him carefully."

Yet some of these miserable men were doubtless present when Jesus said to the man with the withered hand: *Stretch forth thy hand, and he stretched it forth, and it was restored to health even as the other (St. Matt. xii.).* To the hearts of these men His Heart is now saying: *Is My hand shortened that I cannot redeem? or is there no strength in Me to deliver? (Isaiah l.). But now (these things) are hidden from thy eyes (St. Luke xix.).*

B. *The Priests with the whole Council.*

Meanwhile our Blessed Lady sees all and hears all. But the Sacred Heart of her Son is speaking a word of comfort to her and reminding her of the prophetic promise *Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled. The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in iniquity. Not for ever shall He remain bowed down and miserable. The will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand (Isaiah liii.).*

Though these unhappy Rulers are scoffing now at the

sight of His misery, yet the memory of this misery will draw many hearts to Him.

*I have spoken to you, God said of old, I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me (Jerem. xxxv.). But in the days that are to come, hallowed by the Passion of Jesus, He will speak early in the morning, bent down to the pillar in the dungeon, and many, very many, will hear, and rise in haste to come to Him.*

*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth (1 Kings iii.).*

## SCENE IV.

## THE JUDGMENT-HALL.

## STATION I.

*All the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvii. 1).*

A. They hasten back to the judgment-hall. Jesus is let loose from the pillar, but is still tightly bound, and with His chains upon Him. In this condition He is dragged quickly up the steps and through the courtyard into the presence of His judges. For so they command: Make haste and lead Him carefully.

His own Divine heart is also saying: *Do it quickly. With desire I have desired the dawn of this Pasch; this first Good Friday.*

B. Were the Prophet Daniel here he would now lift up his voice as he did when Susanna had been sentenced and was being led to death: *Standing in the midst of them he said: Are you so foolish, ye children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her (Dan. xiii.).* Oh, with what heavenly earnestness would he call upon these morning judges to reverse and undo the wickedness of the night: *Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against Jesus of Nazareth.*

But, alas! the judges of the night are now again the judges in the morning, and they are only here to ratify their sin, and spread their inquiry to others.

*They took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death.*

*O ye kings, understand: receive instruction, ye that judge the earth (Psalm ii.).*

## STATION II.

*They brought Him into the Council, saying: If Thou be Christ, tell us (St. Luke xxii. 66).*

A. This is supposed to be the legal trial. The judges are now here lawfully assembled to try their Prisoner. But, we notice, no witness is called now. Not a word is said about forbidding tribute, or disturbing the people, or pulling down the Temple. All this trifling is discarded; and the one question about which they are really in earnest is put at once, *Art Thou the Christ?*

This is precisely what has been arranged in Heaven. This question well pleases the Heart of our Lord. This question gives contentment to the soul of His Ever-Blessed Mother. The listening angels, also, are glad to hear this question solemnly put. Let us, too, join heartily and say with her and with them: *Tu rex gloriae, Christe. Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.* The spirits of darkness alone are not content.

It gives them no pleasure that this is the only sin found in Jesus.

B. *Art Thou the Christ?*

We may kneel humbly before the altar, and when the Sacred Host is elevated, ask most reverently: *Art Thou the Christ, Lord?* Oh yes, I believe, help my unbelief.

C. *Art Thou the Christ?*

We may ask it of the poor man who begs. For most solemnly does our Lord Jesus say to us that, whether we say "Yes" or "No" to His poor delegate, we say it to Him.

"O my most merciful Lord Jesus, how shall I endure it if at the Judgment Thou shalt say to me, *I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat?*"

D. *Art Thou the Christ?*

Put the question, again, to him who has wronged us, and been an enemy: "*Art thou the Christ?*" For if so, if the Lord identifies Himself with you, and says that if I touch you I touch the apple of His eye, oh, go in peace! for I have no quarrel with you. If you wronged me, you did not know what you were doing. May the Lord forgive you fully, and bless you!"

E. *Art Thou the Christ?*

Ask it of His Vicar? "Art thou His representative? As His Father sent Him, has He sent you? Is His Holy Spirit giving testimony with you and through you?" If so, I believe; O my Lord, *help my unbelief.*

### STATION III.

*And He saith to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me nor let Me go* (vv. 67, 68).

A. Not one of these blinded men is so blind as not to see, *that never man spoke* in their presence as this Man speaks. The Man whom they just now saw *bowed down and miserable, and acquainted with infamy*, He stands erect—"in *ter mortuos liber*" (Psalm lxxxviii.); the only one free in presence of so many dead men, dead with the death of the soul—*free among the dead*, and speaking *as one that hath authority* over all His judges.

B. *You will not let Me go.*

And we must notice how meek His words are; how they all come from the abundance of His charitable Heart, desirous to soften their hearts of stone; desirous to move these unjust judges to reason calmly and judge justly.

C. *You will not let Me go.*

He wishes to bring home to them that no matter what

He says, what arguments He brings, what proofs He gives, what witnesses He calls, what miracles He works, they will not set Him free. Their wills are fixed and resolved on His death.

He has heretofore wrought before their eyes wonders such as no other man has wrought: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.).

D. "*Attendite.*" Greater things than these unhappy men saw we have seen. Greater wonders have been wrought for us.

"*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy: blot out my iniquity: for had the things been done for others that have been done for me, long ago they would have done penance, and long ago they would have loved Thee fervently.*"

### STATION IV.

*But hereafter the Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God* (v. 69).

A. At the midnight trial, our Lord reminded the Priests and Ancients of the Judgment to come. He does so now again in His great charity and compassion. For He knows that the thought of this terrible accounting day oftentimes baffles all the efforts of Satan, and deters the tempted man from consummating his sin.

Let us call to mind some of the sacred words which set before us how salutary it is to remember the Judgment.

1. *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin* (Ecclus. vii.). Against all kinds of sin, then, the thought of the Judgment is a powerful medicine.

2. It is efficacious when we are tempted to anger and hatred—how common a danger!

*Remember thy last end, and let enmities cease* (Ecclus. xxviii.).



3. It prevents us from being unjust to servants, or hard on the poor.

Holy Job tells us that he never dared to act unfairly to his man-servant, or maid-servant, or to deny to the poor what they desired.

*For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge : and when He shall examine, what shall I answer ? (Job xxxi.).*

B. Another word to be laid up in our hearts is : *Judge not and you shall not be judged.* In the whole of the Sacred Books is there a more wonderful promise than this ? If we have only the sense to abstain from judging severely and condemning a fellow-sinner, no worse than ourselves, we shall have nothing to fear when this Judgment comes, for which our Lord so much desires us to prepare. If we do not avail ourselves of this marvellous promise, we shall have good reason to make that everlasting moan : *We fools ! We fools !*

#### STARRON V.

*Then said they all : Art Thou then the Son of God ? Who said, You say that I am. And they said, What need we any further testimony ? For we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth (vv. 70, 71).*

A. *Art Thou then the Son of God ?*

Our Blessed Saviour had not called Himself the Son of God. His words are : *The Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God.*

But they have known in time past that He does claim to be the Son of God. Three days ago, they heard Him prove unanswerably from the Scriptures that the Christ was to be something more than a mere son of David. And our Blessed Saviour stated at the Supper that they had full and sufficient knowledge that He was the Son of God : *They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*

We know, moreover, from the revelation in the Book of Wisdom, that this is their one supreme grievance : *He*

*maketh Himself the Son of God. He boasteth that He hath God for His Father.*

The watchful and overruling providence of God takes good care that it be made clear and evident that He is put to death not as a malefactor, but because *He maketh Himself the Son of God.*

*B. What need we any further testimony?*

St. Peter exhorts us all to live so that we suffer not as wrong-doers, but as followers of Christ: *For this is thanksworthy if for conscience towards God a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if committing sin and being buffeted for it you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thanksworthy before God* (1 St. Peter ii.). We sometimes complain loudly if made to suffer when we think that we have not deserved it; we say, we could bear it if we had done wrong. But when these are our dispositions, should we bear it at all more patiently even if we had sinned?

A very common and very bad state of soul is when we will not suffer patiently, whether we are guilty or not.

A much better state is that of the Good Thief, who willingly accepts what he has deserved: *We indeed justly, for we have received the due reward of our deeds.*

The highest and best state of all is that of those who with their Divine Master willingly suffer persecution, merely because they are children of God and true to Him.

*C. What need we any further testimony?*

No! Witnesses are not wanted; for they are not come to seek for truth, but *that they might put Him to death* (St. Matt. xxvii.). No; it is most true that from the beginning they needed no witnesses at all. The calling of witnesses was a superfluous and vain folly, just as the armed force was that sallied out to seize Jesus. Pilate the Roman will want to have witnesses, to prove that He is a malefactor against Roman laws; of such they have none. But to prove that He calls Himself the Son of

God and is the Son of God, they have His own profession ; they have His miracles ; they have the voice of His Father from Heaven, heard at the Jordan, and again at the Temple four days ago.

*We ourselves have heard it from His own mouth.* Yes, both now and oftentimes before. It is certain beyond all doubt that He claims to be and is the Son of God. Therefore the whole Council now ratifies and legalises the unjust and illegal sentence of the midnight : *He is guilty of death.*

*D. Art Thou the Son of God ?*

Not then as a malefactor is our Lord to die ; for He is the innocent Son of God. But for this and for this only He deserves to die, that *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

Our Blessed Lady is listening ; and if we would listen to her, she would say to each of us most lovingly and earnestly : *Forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee* (Eccius. xxix.).

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

END OF THE NIGHT WATCHES.

FND OF VOL. I.